A

Faithful Narrative

OF

The Proceedings of the

Ecclesiastical Council

Convened at *Salem* in 1734.

OCCASIONED

By the scandalous Divisions in the first Church in that Town, continuing after repeated Admonitions given them in the way of Communion of Churches, expressing that concern and charity they owe to each other, according to the Laws of Christ, and the professed Principles of Congregational Churches.

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Sewell (J.)

BOSTON: Printed for D. HENCHMAN, at the Corner Shop over against the Brick Meeting-House in Corn-hill. 1735.

BRITISH MUSEUM

INTRODUCTION.

THE late eccleſiaſtical council at *Salem*, judging the method of communion of neighbouring churches, as deſcribed by our venerable Synods, to be agreeable to the ſacred Scriptures; and having accordingly made this method the ground of their proceſs; we preface the narrative with the judgment of the Synods of 1648 & 1662, concerning the communion of churches; as follows.

Platform of Church Diſcipline, *Chap.* XV.

Of the Communion of Churches one with another.

'I. ALthough churches be diſtinct, and therefore 'may not be confounded one with another, 'and equal, and therefore have not dominion 'one over another; yet all the churches ought to pre-'ſerve *church communion* one with another, becauſe 'they are all united unto Chriſt, not only as a myſti-'cal but as a political head, whence is derived a Com-'munion ſuitable thereunto. *Rev.* 1. 4. *Cant.* 8. 8. 'Rom. 16. 16. 1 *Cor.* 16. 19. *Acts* 15. 23. *Rev.* 2. 1.

II. ' The communion of churches is exerciſed ſundry ' ways. 1. By way of mutual care, in taking thought ' for one anothers welfare. 2. By way of conſultation ' one with another, when we have occaſion to require ' the judgment and counſel of other churches, touch- ' ing any perſon or cauſe wherewith they may be bet- ' ter acquainted than our ſelves. As the church at ' *Antioch* conſulted with the apoſtles and elders of the ' church at *Jeruſalem*, about the queſtion of *circumci- ſion* of the gentiles, and about the falſe teachers that ' broached that doctrine. In which caſe, when any ' church wanteth light or peace amongſt themſelves, ' it is a way of communion of churches (according to ' the word) to meet together, by their elders and ' other meſſengers in a Synod, to conſider and argue ' the points in doubt or difference; and having found ' out the way of truth and peace, to commend the ' ſame by their letter and meſſengers to the churches ' whom the ſame may concern. But if a church be ' rent with diviſions among themſelves, or lie under ' any open ſcandal, and yet refuſe to conſult with ' other churches, for healing or removing of the ſame, ' it is matter of juſt offence both to the Lord Jeſus, and ' to other churches, as bewraying too much want of ' mercy and faithfulneſs, not to ſeek to bind up the ' breaches and wounds of the church and brethren; ' and therefore the ſtate of ſuch a church calleth aloud ' upon other churches to exerciſe a fuller act of bro- ' therly communion, to wit, by way of admonition. ' 3. A third way then of communion of churches is by ' way of *admonition*; to wit, in caſe any publick offence ' be found in a church, which they either diſcern not, ' or are ſlow in proceeding to uſe the means for the re- ' moving and healing of. *Paul* had no authority over ' *Peter*, yet when he ſaw *Peter* not walking with a ' right foot, he publickly rebuked him before the ' church. Tho' churches have no more authority one ' over another, than one apoſtle had over another, yet ' as one apoſtle might admoniſh another, ſo may one ' church admoniſh another, and yet without uſurpa- ' tion.

'tion. In which caſe if the church that lieth under 'offence, do not hearken to the church that doth ad-'moniſh her, the church is to acquaint other *neigh-'bour churches* with that offence which the offending '*church* ſtill lieth under, together with their neglect 'of the brotherly admonition given unto them; 'whereupon thoſe other *churches* are to join in ſe-'conding the admonition formerly given; and if ſtill 'the offending *church* continue in obſtinacy and im-'penitency, they may forbear communion with them, 'and are to proceed to make uſe of the help of a Sy-'nod, or council of neighbour *churches* walking or-'derly (if a greater cannot conveniently be had) for 'their conviction. If they hear not the Synod, the 'Synod having declared them to be obſtinate, particu-'lar *churches* approving and accepting the judgment 'of the ſynod, are to declare the ſentence of non-com-'munion reſpectively concerning them; and there-'upon, out of a religious care to keep their own com-'munion pure, they may juſtly withdraw themſelves 'from participation with them at the Lord's table, and 'from ſuch other acts of holy communion as the com-'munion of *churches* doth otherwiſe allow & require. 'Nevertheleſs, if any members of ſuch a church as lieth 'under publick offence, do not conſent to the offence 'of the church, but do in due ſort bear witneſs againſt 'it, they are ſtill to be received to wonted communi-'on; for it is not equal that the innocent ſhould ſuffer 'with the offenſive. Yea, furthermore, if ſuch inno-'cent members, after due waiting in the uſe of all 'good means for the healing of the offence of their 'own *church*, ſhall at laſt, (with the allowance of the 'council of neighbour churches) withdraw from the 'fellowſhip of their own church, and offer themſelves 'to the followſhip of another, we judge it lawful for 'the other church to receive them (being otherwiſe 'fit) as if they had been orderly diſmiſſed to them 'from their own *church*. 4 A fourth way of commu-'nion of churches is by way of *participation*. The 'members of one church occaſionally coming to ano-

'ther,

'ther, we willingly admit them to partake with us at 'the Lord's table, it being the ſeal of our communion, 'not only with Chriſt, nor only with the members of 'our own church, but alſo with all the churches of the 'ſaints; in which regard we refuſe not to baptize 'their children preſented to us, if either their own 'Miniſter be abſent, or ſuch a fruit of holy fellowſhip 'be deſired with us. In like caſe, ſuch churches as are 'furniſhed with more miniſters than one, do willingly 'afford one of their own Miniſters to ſupply the place 'of an abſent or ſick miniſter of another church for 'a needful ſeaſon. 5. A fifth way of church commu-'nion, is by way of *recommendation*, when a member 'of one church, hath occaſion to reſide in another 'church, if but for a ſeaſon, we commend him to their 'watchful fellowſhip, by letters of recommendation; 'but if he be called to ſettle his abode there, we com-'mit him according to his deſire, to the fellowſhip of 'their covenant, by letters of diſmiſſion. 6. A ſixth 'way of church-communion is in caſe of need, to mini-'ſter relief and ſuccour one unto another, either of a-'ble members, to furniſh them with officers, or of out-'ward ſupport, to the neceſſities of poorer churches, as 'did the churches of the *Gentiles* contribute liberally 'to the poor ſaints at *Jeruſalem*. *Cant.* 8. 8. *Acts* 15. '2, 6, 22, 23. *Ezek.* 34. 4. *Gal.* 2. 11, to 14. *Mat.* 18. '15, 16, 17. *By proportion. Gen.* 18. 25. 1 *Cor.* 12. 13. '*Rom.* 16 1. *Acts* 18. 27. and 11. 22, 29. *Rom.* 13. 26, 27.

III. 'When a company of believers propoſe to gather 'into a *church-fellowſhip*, it is requiſite for their ſafer 'proceeding, and the maintaining of the communion 'of churches, that they ſignify their intent unto the 'neighbour churches, walking according unto the or-'der of the goſpel, and deſire their preſence and help, 'and right hand of fellowſhip, which they ought rea-'dily to give unto them, when there is no juſt cauſe 'of excepting againſt their proceedings. *Gal.* 2. 1, 2. 'and 9. *by proportion.*

IV. 'Beſides theſe ſeveral ways of *communion*, there is 'alſo a way of *propagation* of *churches*: When a 'church

'church ſhall grow too numerous, it is a way, and fit 'ſeaſon to propagate one church out of another, by 'ſending forth ſuch of their members as are willing 'to remove, and procure ſome officers to them, as may 'enter with them into church eſtate amongſt them-'ſelves. As Bees, when the hive is too full, iſſue 'forth by ſwarms, and are gathered into other hives; 'ſo the churches of Chriſt may do the ſame upon like 'neceſſity; and therein hold forth to them the right 'hand of fellowſhip, both in their gathering into a 'church, and in the ordination of their officers. *Iſai.* '49. 20. *Cant.* 8. 8, 9.

Synod of 1662. Queſtion 2. Prop. IV.

IV. 'ACTS of communion of churches are ſuch as 'theſe:

1. *Hearty care and prayer one for another,* 2 Cor. 11. 28. Cant. 8 8 Rom. 1. 9. Col. 1. 9. Eph. 6. 18.

2. *To afford relief, by communication of their Gifts in temporal or ſpiritual neceſſities,* Rom. 15. 26, 27. Acts 11. 22, 29. 2 Cor. 8. 1, 4, 14.

3. *To maintain unity and peace, by giving account one to another of their publick actions, when it is orderly deſired.* Acts 11. 2, 3, 4, 18. Joſh. 22. 13, 21, 30. 1 Cor. 10. 32. *and to ſtrengthen one another in their regular adminiſtrations; as in ſpecial by a concurrent teſtimony againſt perſons juſtly cenſured.* Acts 15. 41. & 16. 4, 5. 2 Tim. 4. 15. 2 Theſ. 3. 14.

4. *To ſeek and accept help from, and give help unto each other:*

(1.) *In caſe of diviſions and contentions, whereby the peace of any church is diſturbed,* Acts 15. 2.

(2.) *In matters of more than ordinary importance,* Prov. 24. 6. and 15. 22. *as Ordination, Tranſlation, and Depoſition of elders, and ſuch like.* 1 Tim. 5. 22.

(3.) *In doubtful and difficult queſtions and controverſies doctrinal or practical, that may ariſe.* Acts 15. 2, 6.

(4.) *For*

(4.) *For the rectifying of male-administrations, & healing of errors and ſcandals, that are unhealed among themſelves.* 3 Joh. ver. 9, 10. 2 Cor. 2. 6, 11. 1 Cor. 15. Rev. 2. 14, 15, 16. 2 Cor. 12, 20, 21. and 13. 2. Churches now have need of help in like caſes, as well as churches then. Chriſt's care is ſtill for whole churches, as well as for particular perſons; and apoſtles being now ceaſed, there remains the duty of brotherly-love, and mutual care and helpfulneſs incumbent upon churches, eſpecially elders for that end.

5. *In love and faithfulneſs to take notice of the troubles and difficulties, errors and ſcandals of another church, and to adminiſter help (when the caſe manifeſtly calls for it) though they ſhould ſo neglect their own good & duty, as not to ſeek it.* Exod. 23. 4, 5. Prov. 24. 11, 12.

6. *To admoniſh one another when there is need and cauſe for it; and after due means with patience uſed, to withdraw from a church or peccant party therein, obſtinately perſiſting in error or ſcandal*; as in the *Platform of Diſcipline* (Chap. 15 Sect. 2. Partic. 3) is more at large declared. Gal. 2. 11. 14. 2 Theſ. 3. 6. Rom. 16. 17.

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A Brief
NARRATIVE
OF
A Proceſs with the firſt Church in *Salem*, &c.

THE ſecond church in *Boſton*, having ſent an admonition to the firſt church in *Salem*, for their ſcandalous neglect of means to heal the unchriſtian diviſions which have ariſen and prevailed for ſome years among them; and that admonition having been ſeconded by the third church in *Boſton*, the church in *Rumny Marſh*, and the firſt church in *Gloceſter*, but without the deſired good effect; thoſe four Churches thought it their duty to *make uſe of a council of neighbour churches walking orderly for the conviction of that* offending *church*, as is directed in our *platform of church diſcipline*, Chap. XV.

Letters of communion were accordingly directed to *ſeven and twenty churches*, requeſting them to meet by their paſtors and other delegates in an eccleſiaſtical council upon this important occaſion: And *nineteen* of the ſaid churches ſent their delegates; who met at *Salem*, July 16. 1734, choſe the reverend Mr. *Nehemiah Walter* their Moderator, and, as to the method of proceeding in their votes, determined, that *all votes paſſed by the Council ſhould be taken from the majority of the churches and not of particular perſons*, and that *the elders of the churches ſhould have only a ſingle vote.*

When the delegates of the four churches were notified by a committee, that the council was ready to receive them, they came in, and ſignified by their moderator that they were prepared to open the caſe in a publick hearing; but, as it was late in the afternoon, the council put off the hearing to the next day.

Next morning a committee was ſent to the reverend Mr *Fiske* paſtor of the firſt church in *Salem*, (who, as appeared by a letter from the paſtors of the four churches, had been ſeaſonably informed of the calling of this council) to notify him, that the council were about to give a publick hearing to what the delegates of the four churches had to lay before them; and that he and his church were deſired to meet them within an hour at the meeting-houſe of the firſt pariſh in *Salem*, and communicate to them what they had to offer. But the committee returned from Mr. *Fiske* with this anſwer, "That, as he had always declared againſt *the third way* "of *Communion*, and therefore had all along refuſed to "have any thing to do in this way, ſo he ſtill declared againſt it, & refuſed to have any thing to do in this "matter." Whereupon another Committee was ſent to notify the brethren of the firſt church in *Salem*, that the council were met & would have a publick hearing of the caſe, and to deſire them to appear and offer what they had to ſay: And, when this committee return'd with a report, that all the brethren of the church, except one, had been notified by them, the council adjourned to three o'clock P. M. at the meeting houſe.

The delegates of the four churches appear'd to open the caſe at the time and place of adjournment, and in the name of their reſpective churches laid it before the council; by reading an inſtrument, in which (1) They declare the grounds upon which they have proceeded in admoniſhing the firſt church in *Salem* and calling this council: (2) They give a narrative of the caſe which has occaſioned their preſent application to other churches: And, (3) They propoſe what they deſire and expect from this council.

This

This inſtrument, with the letters and teſtimonies which ſupported the narrative of their proceedings, we think proper to be given in the ſame order as they were laid before the council; as follows.

Mr. Moderator,

" A Venerable council being here convened at the " requeſt of the ſecond and third churches in " *Boſton*, the church in *Rumny Marſh*, and the " firſt church in *Gloceſter*, the delegates of thoſe churches are now preſent, in their name to declare *the grounds upon which they have proceeded* in admoniſhing the firſt church in *Salem*, and calling you together at this time; to give a *faithful narrative of the melancholy caſe* which has occaſioned their preſent application to other churches; and to propoſe *what they deſire and expect from this venerable council*: And we beg your patience, while we endeavour theſe things in as brief and clear a manner as we are able.

§. 1. " We begin with declaring *the grounds upon which our churches have proceeded*: and they are ſuch as theſe following; which we think agreable to reaſon and ſcripture, as well as to our platform of church diſcipline.

1. " That in caſes of miſchievous unchriſtian diviſions and contentions ariſing & prevailing among them, 'tis the duty of a church of Chriſt to meet together, and uſe means of healing among themſelves; and where ſuch means are ineffectual, 'tis the duty of our churches to ſeek and accept help from, and give help to one another.

2. " That when a church rent with diviſions refuſes either to meet and uſe means among themſelves, or (when they are ineffectual) to conſult with neighbour churches for healing the ſame, 'tis matter of offence to Chriſt, and to other churches: ſuch diſregard of the breaches and wounds of the church and brethren bewraying too much want of mercy and faithfulneſs.

3. " That when any church in love and faithfulneſs " takes notice of the troubles, difficulties and ſcandals " ariſing and continuing long in a neighbour church, " the caſe may be ſuch as manifeſtly calls them to ad- " miniſter help to that neighbour church; tho' they " ſhould ſo neglect their own good and duty as not " to ſeek it: As particularly, when a church doth not " diſcern, or is ſlow in proceeding to uſe means for " healing and removing a publick offence; and ſome " of the members of it (according to the advice of a " council of churches) make application for charitable " help.

4 " That when a church think themſelves called " thus to adminiſter help to a neighbour church, they " have a juſt claim to communion with that church " by letters & conference: and 'tis juſt matter of " ſcandal, if ſuch communion is denied them, without " the neighbour church's giving ſome ſufficient rea- " ſon for it.

5. " That when a church which adminiſters chari- " table help to their neighbours who neglect the " means of peace, is not allowed communion with " them in ſuch ways, and no weighty reaſon is given " by the neighbouring church for refuſing it, this is a " juſt occaſion for admoniſhing them: and if repeated " admonitions are obſtinately diſregarded, there is " then occaſion for calling a council of other chur- " ches to uſe means for their conviction, and to de- " clare them obſtinate in ſcandal, if they will not " be brought to uſe the means of peace as becomes a " church of Chriſt.

" Theſe are *the grounds* upon which our churches " have proceeded in admoniſhing the firſt church in " *Salem*, and calling this council.

And,

§. 2. " In the next place we are to give you *a faith- " ful narrative of the melancholy caſe* which has occa- " ſioned their calling you together: That you may " be able to judge from facts, whether they had ſuffi-

" cient

" cient reaſon for what they have done upon the fore-
" mentioned grounds and principles; which we ſup-
" poſe will not be diſputed among congregational
" churches.

" And here we are to give a juſt and impartial ac-
" count of the caſe, as it was tranſacted by the ſecond
" church in *Boſton* alone, and as it was tranſacted by
" the other foremention'd churches in conjunction
" with them.

" The ſecond church of *Boſton* at a meeting January
" 30. 1733, received a letter from twenty one bre-
" thren of the firſt church in *Salem* dated December
" 20, which runs in the following words,

To the reverend Mr. *Joſhua Gee*, & Mr. *Samuel Mather*,
Paſtors of the ſecond church of Chriſt in *Boſton*.
To be communicated.

Reverend honored and beloved,

THis letter is to inform you, that the aggrieved of the firſt church of Chriſt in Salem *(agreable to the advice of the council of ten churches aſſembled here on the 17th. of* July *laſt) have renewed their application, to the rev. Mr.* Samuel Fiske, *for the removal of their grievances, by giving them chriſtian ſatisfaction to the articles of charge exhibited in their paper of the 16th. of March* 1731: *and that Mr.* Fiske *has refuſed to hear and endeavour their ſatisfaction, will abundantly appear to you from his letter of the 31ſt of* Auguſt 1733, *a copy of which is herewith preſented to you, as alſo the copies of all the proceedings ſince the council.*

The aggrieved, in a letter of the 4th of September, did earneſtly deſire the rev. Mr. Fiske, *that he would give them an opportunity of laying the caſe before the Church, by calling them together in a church-meeting, to hear and conſider what might be offered both by the paſtor and the aggrieved; to which Mr.* Fiske *has given no anſwer to this day.*

The

The aggrieved, perceiving no prospect of a hearing in the church in a church-meeting called by the pastor, have spent much time and pains in endeavouring a conference with their brethren who remain satisfied with the pastor's conduct & behaviour (thinking that brotherly conferences might have a tendency to unite their sentiments, and so be a means of putting an happy issue to their distressed state) but cannot obtain such a conference notwithstanding all their earnest endeavours therefor: so that the ancient church of Christ at Salem remains still in bleeding dying circumstances, & its members are scattered abroad as sheep without a shepherd, exposed to the temptations & allurements of such as would draw them off from their communion; there seeming to be no faithfulness nor care to seek such as are in danger of being lost.

We apprehend, that the broken and distressed state of this church (next to our sins the procuring cause of divine judgments) is owing to the contempt of the discipline, and good order of the churches of this land. And we fear, that unless the great head of the church, in his infinite mercy and tender compassion to us, does incline your hearts, or the hearts of some of his faithful servants in these churches, to inquire into the irregularities of this church, and (if need be) to exercise that discipline towards it, as is laid down in our platform of church government, we shall be in the utmost hazard of sinking into such indifferency and libertinism in religious matters as will in a little time altogether destroy the power, if not the very form of godliness amongst us.

Now we pray that the God of peace, which brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, would grant to you that direction relating to us, as may conduce most to his glory, and our spiritual good, and make you perfect in every good work, to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

We

We are your brethren in the goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt,

Salem, Decemb. 20th. 1734.

As to the articles of charge the aggrieved brethren formerly exhibited againſt our rev. paſtor, we deſire to leave them to God, the great, omniſcient, and impartial judge of all things.

But as to the conduct of our rev. paſtor under theſe our preſent diſtreſſes; not to have any ſeeming inclination to reſtore the peace of his church, to recover ſuch as go away from our communion, is very aſtoniſhing.

Can it be ſafe then for us to live ſo? judge ye.

Thomas Barton
James Odell
Jonathan Gardner.

Benjamin Lynde
James Lindall
Benjamin Marſton
John Bickford
Henry Weſt
Samuel Ropes
Nathanael Phippen
BenjaminLynde, Jun.
John Nutting
Samuel Weſt
Nathaniel Ropes
George Daland
Samuel Giles
James Grant
John Archer
Miles Ward, Jun.
Benjamin Lambert
John Bickford, Jun.

" This letter was read with the copies of ſix others " therein referred to, which are as follows,

Salem, Auguſt 20. 1733.

Rev. Sir,

AGreeable to the chriſtian advice given to us, in a reſult of a council of ten churches convened at Salem *on the 17th of July laſt, for our healing and peace by God's will, we do now once again earneſtly beſeech and intreat you, to give us chriſtian ſatisfaction, to thoſe articles of charge by many of us exhibited againſt you, in a paper of the 16th of March 1731: that the dangerous contention which for a long time has prevailed amongſt us, may iſſue in that forgiveneſs, peace, unity, and brotherly love, which are ſo pleaſant, beautiful, and ornamental in the chriſtian life.*

We

We are the aggrieved brethren of your flock,

John Nutting	Benjamin Lynde
Nathanael Ropes	James Lindall
George Daland	Henry Weſt
James Grant	Samuel Ropes
Miles Ward, jun.	Nathanael Phippen
John Archer	Samuel Weſt
Samuel Giles.	Benjamin Marſton
	Benj. Lynde, jun.

To the rev. Mr. *Samuel Fiske*,
Paſtor of the firſt Church of
Chriſt in *Salem*.

Mr. *Fiske*'s Letter of the 31ſt of Auguſt 1733.

Brethren,

YOur paper of the 20th inſtant I have conſidered, and obſerve to you, That you may not expect, the reſult of your council ſhould be deciſive with me: and among many reaſons, this more eſpecially may be noticed; that having the caſe but from one ſide, a right underſtanding and judgment thereof could not be had and formed The wiſe and juſt king Solomon obſerves in the 18th Proverbs 17. *And without doubt to me, this obſervation had literally been verifyed in our controverſy, had a hearing been regularly brought forward and had upon it. How far that reſult may be acceptable to you, you beſt know. I do not find any light for information, proof and conviction, exhibited in or with it; nor that it hath determined, what the ſatisfaction is, which you may deſire: nor have your ſelves now, in your laſt paper, propoſed what it ſhall be. How then ſhould I be able to know, what you or your councils deſires are on that head?*

Brethren, *Were I ſenſible I had wronged you, in the particulars which your paper dated March 16th* 1731, *ſuggeſts, I ſhould freely have done you right. And that this matter might rightly be determined, I fully made a propoſal to you in writing, dated May* 3d. 1733. *which no perſon hath yet ſhewed to me, is unreaſonable, arbitrary*

erary or unſcriptural. Wherefore I may well reſt my ſelf on that bottom, nor may I hope any ſafe or abiding unity and peace, on any other foundation than that of truth and juſtice, which, as I take it, that propoſal lays; and which if purſued, I believe would ſoon ſettle things among us.

I am brethren,

your affectionate & faithful paſtor,

Salem, Aug. 31. 1733.

Samuel Fiske.

Brethrens anſwer to Mr. *Fiske's* foregoing letter.

Rev. Sir,

YOur letter of the 31ſt of Auguſt *laſt in anſwer to ours of the 20th of the ſame month, we have received, with your induſtrious endeavours to perſwade us of your uncertainty about the nature of the ſatisfaction, propoſed for the removing of our grievances.*

That you can be at any difficulty in this matter, when you read our paper of the 16th of March 1731, *to which our laſt letter refers; or that the term* chriſtian ſatisfaction, *mentioned in that letter can be unintelligible to an inſtructor in the duties of chriſtianity, is impoſſible for us to conceive. Nevertheleſs, that you may have a full underſtanding of our notion of* chriſtian ſatisfaction, *in caſe of an offence ſuppoſed, we think that there muſt be either the uſe of all poſſible private means (or publick if need be) to convince the party offended of the innocence of the ſuppoſed offender; or elſe an acknowledgement as full and as publick as the offence, and a declaration of a ſincere and hearty repentance, with deſires of forgiveneſs and reconciliation: neither of which have you as yet at any time attempted.*

If you cannot of your ſelf comply with this our method of ſatisfaction, we do now again earneſtly deſire, you would give us an opportunity of laying our caſe before the church; by calling them together in a church meeting, to hear and conſider of what may be offered both by you and us: that

that ſo there may be an iſſue and determination of our tedious and unhappy controverſy.

We are your aggrieved brethren,

Benjamin Lynde, &c.

Salem, Sept. 4. 1733.

To the rev. Mr. *Samuel Fiſke*, paſtor of the firſt church of Chriſt in *Salem*.

Letter from the aggrieved brethren to their brethren of the ſame church.

Dear brethren,

THe long and unhappy differences in our church, together with the diſmal proſpect and face ſuch a matter carries with it in a church of Chriſt (whoſe ſtrongeſt bond is that of peace and unity) are a ſufficient inducement to all ſerious chriſtians, to do the utmoſt lying in their power, for promoting and obtaining purity peace and order.

It has been upon the moſt ſerious thoughts of theſe things, that we again addreſs our ſelves unto you our dear brethren in the goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, intreating that you would exert your ſelves for the removing of our difficulties, and (by the will of God) the healing our breaches.

And with what words more affecting ſhall we addreſs you, or what conſiderations lay before you more likely to move you, than thoſe left with us by a reverend and honoured council of elders and meſſengers met here on theſe matters: where they declare to the paſtor and the church, both the aggrieved and thoſe that are not, "That all "the intereſt of religion among us, the honour of Chriſt, "together with the ſalvation of our own and our Fami-"lies Souls, are in great hazard by reaſon of the divi-"ſion and contention that has ſo long prevailed among "us; and that therefore it is highly incumbent on every "one to do his utmoſt to put a ſpeedy end thereto.

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A copy of the result of that council we also send you, imagining that many among you may never have had a hearing of the whole; and allow us to beseech you with meekness to receive the word of exhortation offered to you particularly; and consider we pray you seriously thereon.

How much reason have we all indeed to be deeply humbled, that God in his providence has been pleased to allow the breach to be so wide, as to need the advice and help of a council of churches? And how much it was our desire, that it might be healed among our selves, let the many repeated applications and intreaties made by us for that end, both to our reverend pastor, and to your selves (from whom indeed we might have expected relief) be witnesses. But since it has gone so far, it has afforded us this satisfaction, that our steps in the issuing this controversy have been in the opinion of the council agreeable to the rules of the gospel, and the principles of the churches of New-England

At the same time it has been with the greatest grief and concern, we have found our selves slighted and disregarded by you our brethren: we mean, that you have never allowed us an opportunity of discoursing with you together at any of your meetings; when we might have laid before you our grievances, which perhaps had been the happy means (long e're this) to have issued our difficulties, and united us in our holy communion and assembling together; a thing so much desired by us. For however you may think, it's extreamly uncomfortable and distressing, for us to be drove from that house of God which you and we have built to serve and worship him in, and from those to whom we stand in a very near and special relation. We do also declare that nothing less than the assurances of the truth of our charges on the reverend Mr. Fiske, *could have drawn us off from a pastor of such accomplishments: You all know how much he had our hearts, and how easily he might have kept them.*

We would acquaint you, brethren, that, since the aforesaid council, we have again applied to our reverend pastor, for the removal of our grievances, and giving us the christian satisfaction we before had sought; to which

he was pleaſed to anſwer, by endeavouring to perſwade us of his want of knowledge as to the ſatisfaction we asked: which occaſioned our reply, and further explaining what we meant, with a requeſt, that in caſe he could not of himſelf comply therewith, that then he would give us an opportunity of laying our caſe before the church. And now above a month has paſſed ſince we heard any thing from our paſtor. Indeed his carriage in this affair would have ſurprized us, had we not been uſed to ſuch ſmall regard for us. How little has our paſtor ſought us, who have been going from him? Us, the charge of whoſe ſouls, equally with yours, was committed to his care, and will be required of him? How little of concern or affection has been ſhown to or for us, by that our faithful and affectionate paſtor, *as he is pleas'd to term himſelf? Or how little has the ſolemn watch, promiſed at our entring into the holy covenant, been exerciſed to usward, by any fair means to prevent our withdraw, or kind endeavours and deſires to reduce us, and return us to the flock after we were gone? Believe us, brethren, its extreamly hard for us to reconcile the carriage and treatment we have met with, to the rules of the bleſſed goſpel, or the example of the bleſſed Jeſus, the great head of the church, or of the great apoſtle, who (however great) would become all things to all men, if by any means he could gain ſome. Nor has it been leſs ſurprizing to us, to find Mr.* Fiske *ſo little inclined to end this controverſy, eſpecially when it was left to a number of reverend and learned gentlemen; thoſe of his acquaintance and many of his own order too; gentlemen, if inclined to favour any ſide, more likely to think well and put the beſt conſtructions on his actions & conduct, as far as truth and juſtice would allow: and yet too too much conſcious of the danger of putting his carriage & treatment of the flock on trial, he has wholly declined it. What little regard and reſpect has been ſhewn to the advice of that council ſo ſolemnly given; or how little of a compliance with the good advice of a number of reverend elders, met together at Mr.* Fiske's *houſe, on his deſire and requeſt? What innocent perſon would not be*

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glad to clear himself, when so fair an opportunity offered? What innocent person would lye under even the least suspicion of guilt, or the bare supposition of a crime, when it lay in his power to free himself and clear up his credit and innocency?

Notwithstanding all which, dear brethren, on the possibility that (by the blessing of God on our endeavours) all the differences and uneasinesses among us may yet be happily accommodated, we are still begging you would take into consideration our case, and give us an opportunity to discourse with you together on these things: and consider, brethren, the indispensible obligation you are under as Christians, especially as those of the same communion with us, to examine into these matters, and do your utmost for the removing our difficulties, although the pastor has hitherto refused; lest we (tho' with the greatest regret) should be obliged to proceed further in the steps proposed by the aforesaid council, which we beg you would prevent, and, as soon as you can possibly, let us know your minds.

And now, brethren, we earnestly desire you would joyn with us in beseeching almighty God, that he would in his most holy providence, graciously order all these his dispensations toward us to terminate in his glory and our spiritual good and benefit; and that (however melancholy and divided our present state may be) you and we through infinite riches of grace in Jesus Christ, may all be brought safe at last to his heavenly kingdom. & joyn together in our songs of praise to God and our Redeemer, without any the least jarring or uneasiness to hinder or disturb the harmony of our rejoycings throughout the ages of eternity.

We are your brethren in communion,

Salem, Octob. 4th. 1733.

Benjamin Lynde
BenjaminLynde, Jun.
James Lindall
John Nutting
Samuel Ropes

To Deacon *Osgood*, Col. *Barton*, and Mr. *Nathaniel Osgood*, to be communicated to the brethren of the first church of Christ in *Salem*, forthwith.

Nath.

Miles Ward, Jun.	Nathanael Phippen
John Bickford	Samuel Weſt
George Daland	Nathaniel Ropes
Henry Weſt	Samuel Giles
Benjamin Marſton	James Grant
Benjamin Lambert.	John Archer

The brethrens anſwer to the foregoing letter.

Dear brethren,

YOur's of the 4th. of Octob. 1733. *we receiv'd, wherein you acquaint us with a long and unhappy difference in our church, together with the diſmal proſpect and face ſuch a matter carries with it in a church of Chriſt, whoſe ſtrongeſt bond is that of peace and unity. Therefore we now give you to underſtand, that we are not ſtrangers to this long and unhappy difference; but would to God that both you and we were ſtrangers to all differences, but eſpecially this great one which has been ſo long in our church. And, dear brethren, for the healing of this great breach, let us apply our ſelves to the law and to the teſtimony, which is the only rule of faith & manners, and take the ſteps, rules and advice therein given us, to follow peace with all men and holineſs, without which no man ſhall ſee the Lord; and to give no offence to jew nor gentile, nor the church of God: but let us ſtudy to be quiet, and do our own buſineſs, and take our lord & maſter, the great head of the church and wonderful counſeller, for our pattern in all things, who when he was reviled, reviled not again. So, dear brethren, ſince we call him lord and maſter, let us do our utmoſt to comply with his commands, to love our enemies, to bleſs them that curſe us, and do good to them that hate us, and pray for them which deſpitefully uſe and perſecute us; and that when we ſtand praying, we muſt forgive, if we have ought againſt any, that our father alſo which is in heaven may forgive us. What a great number of texts is there in holy writ, that injoyns chriſtians to love one another, and a new command that our Saviour has left with us, that*

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we love one another, and has assured us by this that all men shall know we are his disciples. We observe, brethren, that you say, and with what words more affecting shall we address you, than those left with us by a reverend and honoured council of elders and messengers met here on these matters. *And now brethren, it is amazing to us, that you refer us to the result of a council met here on your request, when we bare testimony against it, and desired those gentlemen not to meet here in council, nor engage themselves in it, unless our reverend pastor should desire a council: however we hope, we shall be always ready, and hope you will also, to take the good advice of good men; and we do allow, that we have all of us have a great deal of reason to be deeply humbled, that God in his providence has been pleased to allow the breach to be so wide. You signify also to us, it was much your desire that the difference might have been healed among our selves, which we believe; and had you have exercised that charity towards our reverend pastor, as we have done, this great difference might have ended long ago; or had you complied with his terms, which we think are reasonable and scriptural, the matter might have been ended, without your troubling such a numerous company of our good neighbours, which has not proved successful in these matters. You also signify to us, that the steps which you have taken in the issuing of this controversy has afforded you this satisfaction, that it is the opinion of the council, agreeable to the rules of the gospel, and the principles of the churches of* New England: *We do verily believe, those good gentlemen went as far as they could in their result; which could not be very far, since they had only the pleas and allegations of one party. We also shall take the liberty, brethren, to tell you, we have acted our conscience in these matters, and that gives us some satisfaction, so it is our duty & interest, and yours, to keep hold on Christ, keep touch with the Spirit, and keep in with conscience; and to exercise our selves to keep consciences void of offence toward God and man. You acquaint us also, brethren, it has been a grief and concern to you that we have slighted you, and*

disregarded

disregarded you; which, brethren, we must be plain with you, and tell you, that you wrong us in such a charge: but we forgive you that wrong, since you go farther, and explain your meaning, that we have never gave you the opportunity of discoursing with us at our meetings, when you might have laid before us your grievances: In answer to that, brethren, some of us has been so unhandsomely treated by some of you, in our private conferences, which gives us but poor encouragement to meet with you together, and causes us almost to despair of ever putting an end to our difficulties. You also tell us, its extreamly uncomfortable and distressing to you, to be drove from that house of God which we and you have built. We allow it, brethren, distressing to be drove: *but the word* drove *seems to us to be a paradox, and wants explanation; for as for our treatment with you, it has been quite the reverse; for after your withdrawing from us, we begged and beseeched you to return again to us, and worship God with us in the same house again. You also declare, brethren, that nothing less than the assurances of the truth of your charges on the reverend Mr.* Fiske, *could have drawn you from a pastor of such accomplishments. So then we conclude, that nothing less than a publick or private acknowlegement of the faults which you alledge against him, or the removal of him, will remove the difficulty which we labour under: and as to your saying, we all know how much he had your hearts, give us leave to say, we never pretended to penetrate the secret recesses of the soul, but this we may be bold to say, that the heart of man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked: but if we should allow he has had a great part of your hearts, we are afraid he has had too little a share of our substances. You say also, that you have again applied to our reverend pastor for the removal of your grievances, and his answer was his want of knowledge as to the satisfaction you ask. If we mistake not, brethren, he would not have wanted knowledge of that, had you laid before him that which you have before us, that nothing less than the assurances of the charges on him, could have drawn you from him: we also confess, that*

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we were partly ignorant of what satisfaction you demand of him, till you signified the assurances of your charges and the truth of them. You say also, that you have again applied your selves to our reverend pastor for christian satisfaction, and you have heard nothing from him: perhaps, brethren, the christian satisfaction which he has given us, is not satisfaction to you, nor to those that are learned and strong; but this we assure you, that those that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please themselves. You acquaint us also, that his carriage and treatment to you doth not surprize you, for you have been used to such small regard from him (or to that effect the words are, if we mistake not) we are afraid, brethren, that if your and our carriage and treatment to him, and his to us, were weighed in the ballance, we should be found wanting: for have we been so tender of his good name as we ought to have been? Have we treated him as a father, and counted him worthy of double honour, and communicated to him in all good things, which we ought to have done? but we fear we have left them undone, and been faulty in a great measure as to those things. You signify to us also, that there may be still a possibility of removing the uneasiness amongst us, with the blessing of God on our endeavours: as to that, brethren, we verily believe the differences amongst us may be happily accommodated, provided you would come into our pastor's measures; which we think may be easily be complied with, and believe will put an end to these long contentions, which have been medled with to a great degree. You signify to us, that we are under an indispensible obligation to examine into these matters, and to do our utmost for the removing your difficulties, altho' the pastor has hitherto refused; lest you should be obliged to proceed further in the steps proposed by your council. Brethren, we do not know what you mean, by saying there is an obligation on us to examine into these matters, unless you count us Gallio like, caring nothing for those matters; but we can assure you, that we made such strict inquiry into those matters, that we can be very easy under the conduct and administration of

our reverend paſtor : and would to God, that you were ſo eaſy under his conduct, which would cauſe our eaſineſs to be greater. You ſeem to threaten us with ſome other ſteps that you will take againſt us : Brethren, take care that you ſtep not aſide : We can aſſure you, dear brethren, that the ſteps which we have taken are according to that reaſon, light, knowledge and underſtanding God has given us : ſo if the Lord be on our ſide, we need not fear what man can do unto us And now, brethren, we earneſtly deſire, that you would joyn with us in prayer to God moſt high, that performs all things for us, that he would pleaſe to pour out on us a ſpirit of love and of fear, and of a ſound mind, that our peace may be as a river, and our righteouſneſs as the waves of the ſea.

We are your brethren in communion,
Salem, Octob. 26. 1733.

James Mackmallin
John Gavit
John Holliman
Edward Norice
Ebenezer Felton
Samuel Symond
Benjamin Gerriſh
Charles King
Benjamin Young
Ahijah Eſtes.

Peter Oſgood
Edmund Batter
James Ruck
Nathanael Oſgood
Ephraim Skerry
Samuel King
John Mackmallin
John Coles
Timothy Pickering
John Giles

To brother *James Lindall*,
brother *Benjamin Lynde*, jun.
and brother *Miles Ward*.
To be communicated.

The anſwer to the foregoing letter.

Dear brethren,

ON the 6th. of Novemb. *we received your letter dated the 26th. of* October *laſt, and have carefully obſerved the whole of it : in doing which, we could not but perceive your ſeveral miſtaken concluſions, drawn from the premiſſes you laid down ; which we paſs over with ſilence,*

ſilence, leſt in anſwering them we offend, which is what we would carefully avoid. Two paſſages more material we would take notice of: one is that wherein you intimate that after our withdraw from you, you begged and beſeeched us to return again to you, and worſhip God with you in the ſame houſe again. *To this we ſay, we are intirely ignorant of any ſuch intreaties, and cannot conceive of your meaning in this paſſage; unleſs it be the errand of two or three of you, coming from eight or ten of your number, with this declaration,* That our withdraw was unjuſtifiable and unwarrantable: *and that theſe expreſſions convey ideas differing very far from the notion of intreaties or beſeechings, is too plain and evident for perſons of the loweſt underſtanding to make any doubt or queſtion of. The other is that wherein you ſay,* Some of you have been ſo unhandſomely treated by ſome of us in private conference, which gives you but poor encouragement to meet together with us, and cauſes you almoſt to deſpair of ever putting an end to our difficulties. *Brethren, we are ſorry for any indecencies that may have paſſed in any of our private conferences, and do imagine, that theſe inconveniencies, that have attended them, are a good argument for our meeting together in a body; when generally ſuch indecencies are prevented by a more orderly management; and we conceive, that our not diſcuſſing our affairs in an orderly & chriſtian like manner, has in a great meaſure occaſioned our preſent contrariety of opinion, and been the means of continuing our difficulties to this day. It muſt be allowed, that ſuch a meeting may have a great tendency, from what may be offered either by you or by us, to bring us nearer together in our ſentiments, and of conſequence nearer to the iſſue of our unhappy ſtate: and until we find by experience, that we cannot meet and diſcourſe together as chriſtians, it is too ſoon to be diſcouraged as to the event. As it was the principal intent of our laſt letter, ſo it is the deſign of this, only to propoſe to you ſuch a meeting; and you need not be at any great pains or difficulty in reſolving this ſingle queſtion, which we deſire from you in a very ſhort time. We heartily*

rily pray for our peace, unity and love; and that the intereſt of religion may revive among us; and are

Your brethren in communion,

Salem Nov. 12. 1733.

James Lindall
Benjamin Lynde, Jun.
Nathanael Phippen
Benjamin Marſton
Henry Weſt
Samuel Ropes
John Nutting
James Grant
Samuel Giles
Miles Ward, Jun.
Nathaniel Ropes
Samuel Weſt
George Daland
John Archer
John Bickford, Jun.
Benjamin Lambert.

P. S. The only queſtion here propoſed is, Whether you will allow us a conference with you, or not? But if we hear nothing from you in a week, we ſhall take it as a denial of our requeſt.

To deacon *Oſgood* and Mr. *Nathanael Oſgood*, to be communicated to the brethren of the church.

" And after conſiderable diſcourſe upon the melancholy ſtate of things in the firſt church of *Salem*, and what might be the incumbent duty of neighbour chriſtians with relation to it, the church being unwilling to act with any precipitation in a matter of ſo great moment, committed the caſe to God by prayer for his gracious direction, and adjourned to *February 6th.*

" At a meeting *February 6th.* the ſecond church in *Boſton*, having further conſidered their duty with relation to the unhappy circumſtances of the firſt church in *Salem*, declared by votes, That they apprehended the conduct of the firſt church in *Salem* was ſcandalous in neglecting to uſe proper means to put an end to the unhappy and unchriſtian differences and diviſions which have ariſen, and for a number of years prevailed among them; and that they

" thought

" thought themſelves called to exerciſe and teſtify
" their communion with the firſt church in *Salem*, ac-
" cording to the method preſcribed in our platform of
" church diſcipline, commonly called, *the third way*
" *of communion*; Accordingly they appointed meſſen-
" gers to viſit the firſt church in *Salem*, to inquire
" more fully into the caſe, and to diſpenſe an admo-
" nition in their name if the caſe ſhould appear to
" call for it. And a letter was voted to be ſigned by
" the paſtors, and ſent to the firſt church in *Salem*.
" It runs in the following terms,

Reverend, honoured, and beloved,

WHen ſome years ago we were firſt afflicted by common report, that unhappy differences & diviſions, greatly prejudicial to the honour of God our Saviour, and threatning to deſtroy the power of godlineſs, had riſen & prevailed among you, we could not but wiſh and pray they might be ſeaſonably removed by a divine bleſſing on proper means applied for the healing of them.

But the melancholy account of your grievous diviſions was confirmed to us by the reſult of a venerable council of churches, aſſembled at Salem *in the ſummer paſt; whoſe endeavours we hoped might be inſtrumental to reſtore peace and love and their deſireable fruits among you.*

And more lately it has renewed our grief, to receive an epiſtle from a number of your brethren dated Dec. 20, 1733. *informing us, that the firſt church of Chriſt in* Salem *remains ſtill in bleeding dying circumſtances, expoſed to ſore temptations, there ſeeming to be no faithfulneſs nor care to ſeek ſuch as are in danger of being loſt; and repreſenting to us, what occaſion there is for ſome of Chriſt's faithful ſervants to endeavour, according to the order and diſcipline profeſſed in our churches, that the woful effects and conſequences of your unhappy diviſions may, by the will of God, be removed and prevented.*

We have therefore had ſeveral church meetings to commend you to the God of all grace and peace, and to ſeek his direction, and conſult about our own duty upon this melancholy

melancholy occaſion. And conſidering after what manner our churches ſtand related to one another; and the ſeveral ways wherein they ſhould exerciſe communion; we have, from a charitable concern to do what lies in our power for the honour of Chriſt and his holy religion among you, and for the ſpiritual welfare comfort and edification of your ſouls, determined to viſit you by our elders and other delegates. We apprehend it our duty, as to ſeek and accept help from other churches, ſo in love and faithfulneſs to give help to others, as there may be occaſion, when we take notice of the troubles difficulties and ſcandals, that may at any time be permitted to ariſe and prevail and continue long among them. And therefore we earneſtly beſeech you, brethren, to give our meſſengers an opportunity to confer with you in a church meeting on the 20th day of February, *when (God willing) they propoſe to be at* Salem, *in order more fully to know your caſe, that we may be able to underſtand what is our further duty with relation to it*

And now wiſhing that peace may be to you, brethren, and love with faith from God the Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; and deſiring your fervent prayers for us, we remain,

Your's in the faith and fellowſhip of the goſpel,

February 6th. 1733,4.

Joſhua Gee
Samuel Mather. } In the name of the church.

To the firſt church
of Chriſt in *Salem.*

" Inſtead of any anſwer to this letter from *the firſt* " *church in Salem,* two letters, the deſign of which " was to prevent the intended viſit, were communi- " cated to the ſecond church of *Boſton,* Feb. 17. one " from eighteen brethren dated Feb. 13, the other " from the reverend Mr. *Fiske* dated Feb. 14. and are " as follows,

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The brethrens letter is in the following words.

Reverend, honoured, and beloved,

HAving ſeen your letter, directed to our reverend paſtor to be communicated; we cannot but declare our ſelves very much ſurprized, that you, having been (without any invitation from us and our reverend paſtor, yea againſt our inclination) already on our caſe, ſhould hold it reaſonable & fit to enter again upon it: ſo that were we altogether ſilent at this time, we could not but be juſtified; foraſmuch as you cannot but be accounted already preposſeſſed. But ſince we have not acted a part, which we cannot maintain, we now lay before you the following conſiderations, viz.

1. *You have not ſo much as ſerved us with a copy of any information or plaint, ſubſcribed by any perſons and brought to you, on which you may have proceeded to act as far as you have done; and what other could we expect from you in order to our knowing what may have been alledged againſt us?*

2. *We do in our conſciences believe, the terms which our reverend paſtor propoſed to our aggrieved brethren,* dated May 3d. 1733. *are reaſonable and ſcriptural; and that we might deal juſtly with him and our ſelves, we cannot but juſtify him in inſiſting ſtill upon them.*

3. *A number of our ſelves were in communion, as well as ſome of our aggrieved brethren, before thoſe votes they ſpeak of were paſſed. Wherefore, were they not genuine, they would be as injurious to us as to them; and it cannot reaſonably be thought, we are leſs tender of our reputation and priviledges, than they are; and as much ſhould we reſent a forgery or interpolation upon our records: but we cannot to this day believe our reverend paſtor guilty of ſuch a crime.*

4. *We have long ſince given our opinion fully to our aggrieved brethren, on our reverend paſtor's terms, and their management, and ſee no reaſon in the leaſt to alter it.*

5. *The ſcripture no where impowers us to receive an accuſation againſt our paſtor (much leſs) without two or*

three

three witneſſes, and leaſt of all doth it allow us to entertain ſurmiſes and apprehenſions againſt him. And we the rather inſiſt upon this, becauſe we ſhould account ſuch uſage unjuſtly had to our ſelves.

6. *By long experience we know our reverend paſtor's good ability and fidelity in his work, and his great kindneſs in being better than his word; for whereas, when he ſettled here, he told us, he would not oblige himſelf to preach a lecture, but would be excuſed from that; and altho' this church by votes took that affair upon it ſelf; yet he ſet up a lecture among us, notifying us it was for one year; and yet was ſo good, as to continue it from year to year for the ſpace of ſeven years: for which reaſons we ſhould be unjuſt and ungrateful to him, did we not acknowledge his labours of love. Therefore we cannot but bear this loud teſtimony for him, and heartily cleave to him.*

7. *Our reverend paſtor hath long ſince given forth an atteſted copy of the votes to the brethren of this church, and declared the reality and truth of them. Beſide which he hath very lately in publick congregation declared his own innocence in relation to the votes, which eſtabliſhed the auditory, for ought any think we know, in the belief of them.*

8. *We cannot ſee any reaſon why we, who are delighted in our reverend paſtor and his adminiſtrations, ſhould be diſquieted from time to time at home and abroad as we are, only becauſe ſome others are and will be uneaſy, thinking to make others ſo. Is it not (at leaſt) as reaſonable, they ſhould be eaſy, becauſe we are? And had it not been far better for them to have left off contention, before they had meddled with it?*

9. *We think our reverend paſtor hath not unreaſonably refuſed to call a church meeting on the caſe of our brethren: nor can we adviſe him to call one on the occaſion you deſire. Upon all which (and more) we cannot but deſire you not to interpoſe in our affairs, or trouble your ſelves with journeying hither on this account; and we expect you will not. Thus commending you to the grace of God*

in

in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and deſiring an intereſt in your prayers, we ſubſcribe our ſelves,

Reverend, honoured, and beloved,

Your brethren in the faith and fellowſhip of the goſpel,

Salem, Febr. 13th. 1733,4.

Edward Norice	Peter Oſgood
Ebenezer Felton	Edmund Batter
Samuel Symonds	James Ruck
Benjamin Young	Samuel King
Nathanael Oſgood	Benjamin Gerriſh
John Gavit	Timothy Pickering
John Holliman	Ahijah Eſtes
John Mackmallin	John Coles
Charles King.	Ephraim Skerry

Mr. *Fiske's* letter is as follows.

Reverend, honoured, and beloved,

YOur letter of the 6th inſtant came to my hand, on the laſt Lord's day. And upon conſideration thereof, I would briefly ſay, That nothing could be more unexpected to me, than that one of the churches which had been already on our caſe, could perſwade themſelves to think it any ways ſuitable, to intereſt themſelves again therein.

You might know, we cannot but look upon our caſe prejudged by you: And ſince I could not think well of your coming here in council, *it is highly improbable I ſhould by the conduct then had, be brought off from my indiſpoſition to lay matters before you now. So far as I know, I am utterly innocent of the things, which ſome of my brethren have apprehended againſt me; wherefore I may well reſt in the propoſal I made to them laſt year,* dated May 3*d.* 1733, *as a proper mean to iſſue our difficulties. A number of our brethren, I perceive have wrote you on your letter to this church: and I ſuppoſe more would have done ſo, had they been at home. I would deal plainly with you, and let you know, that I*

do not think it proper to call the church together accord-
ing to your desire. Wishing you the best of blessings, and
desiring an interest in your prayers, I subscribe my self

Reverend, honoured, and beloved,

Your's in the faith and fellowship of the gospel,

Salem, Febr. 14. 1733,4.

Samuel Fiske, Pastor

" But these letters, instead of representing any new
" state of facts to the second church in *Boston*, serv-
" ed rather to confirm the account they had receiv-
" ed; namely, that scandalous divisions continued in
" the first church of *Salem*, without their having ever
" met together to consult about their duty, and use
" the means of peace. And inasmuch as in sending
" to *Salem*, the second church of *Boston* were not set-
" ting up themselves for judges in the controversy
" between the pastor and the aggrieved (which ap-
" peared to be apprehended in both those letters) but
" were aiming only to stir up the first church in *Salem*
" to judge, and act, and use the means of peace a-
" mong themselves, as becomes a church of Christ
" under such divisions; they therefore still thought
" themselves called to proceed in this way of com-
" munion with the first church in *Salem*: and the de-
" legates were instructed to answer said letters in
" conference with the reverend Mr *Fiske* and the bre-
" thren who sent them, and furnished with a letter
" of admonition to be delivered to the first church in
" *Salem*, if it should appear upon inquiry, that they
" had neglected the means of healing their divisions
" according to the representation given in the first
" paragraph of it.

" The delegates waited on the reverend Mr. *Fiske*
" at *Salem* February 20th. 1733; gave him a particular
" account of what had been voted by the second
" church in *Boston*, and what they desired of the first
" church in *Salem* and of him as the pastor of it;

" claime

claimed the privilege of communion with the firſt church in *Salem* by letters and conference, as what could not be refuſed according to the avowed principles of congregational churches that give the right hand of fellowſhip to one another; and uſed arguments to perſuade him to let the ſecond church of *Boſton* have communion in the ways before mentioned with the church under his paſtoral care.

" And when he inſiſted, that he might reaſonably expect a particular anſwer to the letter he had written to the ſecond church in *Boſton*, they gave him what that church thought a proper and ſufficient anſwer to it; and endeavoured to perſuade him that his letter proceeded upon a miſtake of that church's deſign in ſending their delegates to *Salem*. But after all the arguments and intreaties that were uſed with him, he declared, that he ſhould abide by his letter, and refuſe to call the church together upon this occaſion: and they let him know, they ſhould retire to conſider ſeriouſly of what had been offer'd, and what was their duty; and ſhould wait on him again before they left the town, hoping that upon farther conſideration he might come to another mind.

" After this converſation with the reverend Mr. *Fiske*, the delegates ſent meſſengers to all the brethren who had ſigned the letter of *February* 13th. and deſired a conference with them; hoping to make them ſenſible that their letter proceeded upon a miſapprehenſion of the deſign and intention of the ſecond church of *Boſton* in deſiring communion with the firſt church in *Salem* by letters and conference, and to perſuade them that it was but a reaſonable thing for one congregational church to meet and hear what another had to ſay to them on ſuch an occaſion; but thoſe brethren refuſed a conference with the delegates, who had an opportunity to converſe with none of them ſave deacon *Oſgood*.

" Having thus no hopes of a conference with theſe brethren, and being fully ſatisfied (particularly in

" converſation with the reverend Mr. *Fiske* and dea-
" con *Oſgood*,) that a true repreſentation of the circum-
" ſtances of the firſt church in *Salem* had been given
" to the ſecond church in *Boſton*, the delegates pro-
" ceeded to ſign the forementioned letter of admoni-
" tion; which runs in the following words.

To the firſt church of Chriſt in *Salem*.

Reverend, honoured, and beloved,

WE the delegates of the ſecond church of Chriſt in Boſton, *after a diligent inquiry into your unhappy caſe, are grieved to find, that a true repreſentation of it has been made unto that church: namely, that when ſcandalous differences and diviſions have ariſen and continued for ſome years among you, the proper uſe of means to heal them, and remove the ſcandal they have given, and prevent the ſinful and miſchievous conſequences of them, has been neglected; inſomuch that during their long continuance, and under all their ſad effects, you have never once had a meeting of the church to conſult about your duty, as becomes the diſciples of Chriſt on this melancholy occaſion; tho' it has been once and again requeſted and urged on you, by a conſiderable number of your own brethren.*

And we are now to declare unto you, brethren, that the ſecond church of Chriſt in Boſton, *leſt they ſhould be wanting in that love and faithfulneſs which churches, bound up in the ſame communion, owe to one another, have directed their delegates to come and teſtify to you the grief and ſorrow of heart which has been given them, by ſuch unchriſtian diviſions and contentions prevailing among their brethren.*

And upon finding the repreſentation which had been given them of your caſe to be according to truth, we are directed in their name to aſſure you, that ſuch your conduct is in their judgment very ſcandalous, unbecoming your holy profeſſion, and juſt matter of offence to all the churches of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt thro' the land; and

that

that they think themſelves called, in obedience to him and charity to your ſouls, to bear a teſtimony againſt it, according to the order and diſcipline profeſſed in our churches.

Dear brethren, we appeal to you, whether the churches of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, are not required to be at peace among themſelves —— *to* warn them that are unruly —— *to* withdraw themſelves from every brother that walketh diſorderly —— *to* mark them which cauſe diviſions and offences and avoid them —— *to* maintain brotherly love, —— *and to* follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another? *And for a church of Chriſt in your circumſtances to behave themſelves as you have done: that is, not ſo much as once to meet together to humble your ſelves before God under his awful frowns upon you, and to ſeek his direction and conſult about your own duty; when broken to pieces by contentions which for years together have diſhonoured Chriſt, obſtructed the good effects of the word preach'd, weakened the intereſt of our holy religion in your church and town, and been a grievous hindrance to the ſpiritual comfort and edification of many of your brethren under the ordinances of the goſpel — Dear brethren, let your own conſciences judge and declare, whether this be to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour? Whether this be not to give ſatan, the great adverſary of Chriſt and our ſouls, opportunity and advantage to undermine and weaken the intereſt of pure and undefiled religion among us? And whether this be not juſt matter of offence to neighbour chriſtians, who have any hearty concern for your ſpiritual welfare, and the flouriſhing of Chriſt's kingdom by the power of godlineſs among you? Unleſs the holy Spirit of God hath in a very awful manner withdrawn from you, we are confident, that upon ſerious conſideration and ſelf reflection, you will judge and humble yourſelves before the Lord.*

We do therefore in the name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ſolemnly admoniſh and exhort you our dear brethren, to repent of that ſinful neglect of the means of peace, which argues the want of a becoming concern and zeal for the

honour

honour of Christ, and the welfare of your own and others souls. We exhort you to set apart a day, to humble your selves with fasting before the Lord, to implore his pardoning mercy thro' the blood of the everlasting covenant, and to seek his grace that may enable you for the future to adorn your holy profession. And we advise and beseech you, to meet together as a church of Christ, and, guarding against every evil disposition towards one another, prayerfully to consult about your duty, and to call in the help of other churches, as it may be needful, in order to promote peace with truth and holiness among you.

Whenever you shall in these methods return to your duty, and set your selves in an exemplary manner to make use of proper means for healing your scandalous divisions, and for removing and preventing the woful effects and consequences of them, we are, in the name of the second church of Christ in Boston, *to assure you brethren, that they will stand ready with joyful hearts to testify before all the churches their having received satisfaction for the offence you have given them, and their readiness to exercise towards you all those acts of communion which are due to a church walking in the faith and order of the gospel, and adorning the profession of christianity.*

But in their name we are likewise to assure you, brethren, that if you shall persist in such a neglect of the means of peace, which is just matter of offence to all the churches of Christ, they will, in obedience to him, and in love & faithfulness to your souls, think themselves bound, with the help of other churches, to pursue this our charitable admonition; hoping it will please the glorious head of the church to succeed the endeavours of his faithful servants, for healing your divisions, removing the scandal that has been occasioned by them, and preventing their woful consequences, which we have reason to apprehend.

And now, dear brethren, suffer us to apply our selves to you, as the apostle to the church of Corinth:

1 Cor. 1. 10. We beseech you by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joyned together in the same mind, and

and in the ſame judgment: Finally, brethren, farewell: Be perfect ---- be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace ſhall be with you. *Amen.* 2 Cor. 13. 11.

'At a meeting of the ſecond church of Chriſt in *Boſton*, Feb. 17. 1733.

'The brethren having heard and conſidered this letter of admonition prepared by the delegates lately choſen to viſit the firſt church of Chriſt in *Salem*, voted, it ſhould in their name be delivered to that church; if it ſhall appear upon inquiry that they have neglected the means of healing their diviſions, according to the repreſentation that has been given to us, as in the firſt paragraph.

'Joſhua Gee,
'Samuel Mather. } Paſtors.

Signed by the delegates of the ſecond church of Chriſt in *Boſton*, at *Salem* Febr. 21*ſt*. 1733,4.

Joſhua Gee
Samuel Mather
Edward Hutchinſon
Nathanael Saltonſtall
Edward Procter
James Peirpont
Graſton Feveryeare
William Larrabee.

"Before this letter was preſented to the reverend "Mr *Fiske*, to be communicated, the delegates waited "on him with an account of what they had been do- "ing; and further perſwaded and urged him to call "his church together, and to let the ſecond church in "*Boſton* have communion with them by letters and "conference. And when after long debate about the "reaſonableneſs of claiming it, they found him deter- "mined, not to call the church together upon this oc- "caſion, nor to accept the foregoing letter which

"was

" was presented to him with earnest and repeated in-
" treaties that he would communicate it, they return-
" ed and made report of their proceedings, to the se-
" cond church in *Boston* who sent them forth. What
" they reported is to be seen in a letter which it oc-
" casioned from the second church in *Boston* to the
" reverend from *Fiske*, dated *March 5th.* 1733,4 and
" which is as follows,

Reverend Sir,

OUR delegates, whom we lately sent to visit the first church of Christ in Salem, *to inquire into their unhappy case, and in our name to dispense an admonition, if the case should appear to call for it, have returned to us with the following melancholy account,* viz *That respectfully waiting on you as the pastor of the first church in* Salem, *they informed you, what we thought our duty relating to the scandalous divisions which remain in that church; and in our name claimed the privilege of communion with them by letters and by christian conference: That they made it known to you, that in our judgment you treat us after an unreasonable and unchristian manner, in refusing to communicate our letter of* February *6th past to the first church in* Salem; *and used arguments to perswade you to call the church together, and communicate our letter, and give them an opportunity in our name to confer with the brethren concerning the things of their peace, and to deliver a brotherly admonition to them, if it should appear to be needful: That you insisted on it as belonging to the pastor alone, to judge whether there shall be church-meetings or no; and whether letters from one church of Christ to another shall be communicated or no: That you insisted on your letter to us, as containing sufficient objections against our coming to* Salem *in the third way of communion; tho' they shewed you how that letter, instead of declaring that the first church in* Salem *had not neglected means of peace under scandalous divisions, turned upon the merits of the cause between you and your aggrieved brethren: That you acknowleged, that during their long contention, the first church in* Salem *had never*

once

once met together to consult about their duty as a church though it had been once and again requested by a considerable number of your brethren : And that upon the whole you refused to let us have communion with the first church in Salem, either by letters or by conference.

The delegates have likewise informed us, what pains they have taken to procure a conference with the brethren that joined in a seperate letter to us, (which evidently misrepresents our design in sending to Salem, as if we were setting up our selves to judge, whether the aggrieved brethren have truth and justice on their side in their special controversy with you their pastor.) and how they were frustrated in all their charitable endeavours, all those brethren refusing to give them a christian conference upon that letter, except deacon Osgood ; and that he readily acknowleged the state of the case had been truly represented to us, namely, that the first church in Salem has never once met together to consult about their duty in this unhappy state of division and contention.

They likewise inform us, that after this they again waited on you, to tell you what steps they had taken, and how they were treated, and to know whether you had come to any new determinations, and whether you would let them have a christian conference with our brethren, the first church in Salem : That you were pleased to reprimand them, as having done what was very extraordinary and unjustifiable in their endeavours to obtain a conference with those brethren who had separately written to us, without first coming to you and obtaining your consent for it : That upon the whole, they could not persuade you to give them a conference with our brethren, the first church in Salem : That thereupon in our name they tendred to you, and intreated you to accept and communicate a letter of admonition, which we sent by them, to be delivered if it should appear upon inquiry that the first church in Salem had neglected the means of peace, as had been represented to us ; and that you with some warmth refused the letter so tendred to you,

declaring, that you would have nothing to do with a letter that was ſent in the third way of communion. And they inform us, that in order to know what your determination was, after ſome time for cool and calm reflection, they waited on you the next morning; to know whether you perſiſted in refuſing the letter which in our name they again tendered to you, and intreated you to accept and communicate: but that you again refuſed it, declaring that though you could hold communion with us in other ways, yet you were determined not to accept and communicate the letter which came in the third way of communion.

This, reverend ſir, is the account which our delegates have given us: and as we have teſtified our approbation of what they have thus done in our name; ſo we now declare unto you, that we think we have taken the firſt ſtep directed in what is called the third way of communion in our churches. But inaſmuch as we would have a teſtimony in your conſcience, & in the conſciences of all our brethren thro' the land, (who may hereafter be acquainted with our proceedings,) that we act with the tenderneſs, lenity and moderation which becomes the goſpel; and becauſe it would be the joy of our ſouls to ſee the ſecond ſtep in that method prevented, by your doing what we may juſtly expect from one that is not unworthy to ſuſtain the paſtoral office in a congregational church of Chriſt: For theſe reaſons we have determined not to take any further ſtep in the third way of communion before we have again written to you upon this occaſion.

And, reverend ſir, we beſeech you in the bowels of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ſeriouſly to conſider your duty, and to give us the pleaſure of ſeeing you take away from us the neceſſity of calling in the help of other churches, by your acting as becomes an affectionate and faithful paſtor. How can we perſwade our ſelves, you are following the example of zeal for the honour of God and of love and compaſſion to ſouls, which the great ſhepherd and biſhop of ſouls hath left to his miniſters, if you perſiſt in refuſing to call the firſt church in Salem *together, that they may ſeek his direction and conſult about the means of peace; when*

when ſcandalous diviſions that wound the ſouls of your brethren are for a number of years ſo dreadfully prevailing among you ?

Reverend ſir, as we have already by our delegates, we do now again by this our letter, call upon you and beſeech you to communicate the letter we ſent by them, to the firſt church in Salem, *a copy whereof we now incloſe to you. This we intreat of you, declaring it would be the rejoycing of our hearts, to ſee the firſt church in* Salem *return to their duty (by the neglect of which they have given ſcandal) that we might have no occaſion to call in the help of other churches to ſecond our charitable admonition. And if within a month from the date of this letter we ſhall underſtand, that our brotherly admonition has been communicated, and that the firſt church in* Salem *have engaged in the uſe of proper means to heal their ſcandalous diviſions ; we ſhall give our hearty thanks to the God of all grace, that he has honoured us as inſtruments in ſo good a work, and ſhall commend them to him for the ſucceſsful proſecution of it. But if we may not yet be heard by the firſt church in* Salem, *and you ſhall continue to treat us in a manner which we cannot judge to be reaſonable and chriſtian ; then we ſhall think ourſelves called to proceed in our duty, and leave all events with the glorious Head of the church : To the gracious influences of whoſe good Spirit we heartily commend you, and the firſt church in* Salem, *in this day of your temptation ; and are*

reverend ſir,

yours in the Lord,

Joſhua Gee,
Samuel Mather. } *Paſtors, &c.*

This letter was read and voted at a meeting of the brethren of the ſecond church in *Boſton*, *Mar.* 5. 1733,4.

To the rev. Mr. *Samuel Fiſke*,
Miniſter of the goſpel at *Salem*.

" Having no anſwer from the reverend Mr. *Fiske* " to this letter within the time preſcribed; and per- " ceiving nothing had been done by the firſt church " in *Salem* to heal their ſcandalous diviſions, the ſe- " cond church of *Boſton*, at a meeting *April* 9th. 1734, " determined to call in other churches to join in ſe- " conding their charitable admonition. Letters were " accordingly ſent to the churches under the paſtoral " care of the reverend Dr. *Sewall* and Mr. *Prince* in " *Boſton*, the revernd Mr *Cheever* at *Rumny-marſh*, " the reverend Mr. *White* in *Glouceſter*, and the re- " verend Mr. *Wiggleſworth* at *Ipſwich*. And in a " letter of *April* 11th. the reverend Mr. *Fiske* was " notified of this proceeding.

The letter to the four churches is as follows,

Reverend, honoured and beloved,

WE cannot doubt but you have been greatly afflicted, to hear of the ſcandalous differences and diviſions that have ariſen, and prevailed for ſome years, in the firſt church of Chriſt at Salem. *But we are now particularly to inform you, how far we have proceeded on this melancholly occaſion; and to ask your aſſiſtance in the further proſecution of our duty: hoping that our united endeavours may, by the bleſſing of God, be inſtrumental to heal their diviſions, to remove the ſcandal they have given, and to produce the deſirable fruits of peace and brotherly love. We received an epiſtle from a conſiderable number of the brethren of that church, dated* Dec. 20th. 1733, *repreſenting to us what occaſion there was for ſome of Chriſt's faithful ſervants to endeavour, according to the order and diſcipline profeſſed in our churches, that the woful effects and conſequences of their diviſions might be removed and prevented.*

Upon this occaſion we had ſeveral meetings to commend the divided church to the God of peace, and to ſeek his gracious direction, and conſult about our own Duty. And apprehending ourſelves bound, not only to ſeek & accept

help

help from other churches when we needit, but alſo charitably to offer help to other churches when we take notice of troubles, diviſions and ſcandals at any time permitted to ariſe and prevail and continue long among them; we therefore determined by our elders and other delegates to viſit the firſt church in Salem, in order more fully to underſtand their caſe, and to know what might be our further duty relating to it.

We informed them of our deſign in a letter directed to the reverend Mr Fiske, to be communicated to the church, beſeeching them to give our meſſengers an opportunity to conſer with them at Salem upon the 20th day of February paſt: But our letter not being communicated to the church, we could have no anſwer from them. However we receiv'd ſeperate letters from the reverend Mr. Fiske, and from a number of his brethren in the ſame ſentiments with him: which, though written with a deſign to diſcourage our coming to them, rather confirmed us in a perſuaſion that we were called to teſtify our communion with the firſt church in Salem, according to the method preſcribed in our platform of church diſcipline, commonly call'd the third way of communion, and agreeably to the advice of a council of churches aſſembled at Salem in the ſummer paſt. Our delegates were accordingly ſent to Salem, that they might more particularly inquire into the caſe, and ſtir up that church to uſe the proper means for healing their ſinful and miſchievous diviſions.

And tho' the reverend Mr. Fiske refuſed to give them an opportunity to confer with the church, yet they found upon inquiry, that the firſt church in Salem during the long continuance, and under all the ſad effects of their ſcandalous diviſions, had never met together, (though it had been once and again requeſted by a conſiderable number of the brethren) to conſult about their duty, and the means of peace under ſuch awful frowns of God upon them. Whereupon our delegates, as directed by us and in our name, ſigned a Letter of brotherly admonition to the firſt church in Salem; and waited on the reverend Mr. Fiske, intreating him to accept and communicate it:

But

But he once and again refuſed our letter, declaring he would have nothing to do with a letter that came in the third way of communion : ſo that we were denied the priviledge of communion with our brethren the firſt church in Salem, *either by letter or by conference.*

When we received from our delegates an account of what they had done in our name, and how they had been treated by the reverend Mr. Fiske, *and by a number of his brethren who appear to juſtify him in his arbitrary conduct, we were of opinion that nothing further could reaſonably be demanded of us, before we called in the help of other churches to join with us in ſeconding our charitable admonition, as directed in the platform of our church diſcipline. But being deſirous to act with all gentleneſs and moderation becoming the goſpel, and to have a teſtimony for us in the conſciences of all our brethren, who may hereafter be acquainted with our proceedings, we concluded not to take any further ſtep in the third way of communion before we had made another application to the reverend Mr.* Fiske. *Accordingly we wrote to him,* March *the 5th, incloſing a copy of our letter of admonition which he had before refuſed, and beſeeching him to act as becomes an affectionate and faithful paſtor, and thereby to take away from us the neceſſity of calling in the help of other churches ; which we let him know we ſhould think our duty, if we heard nothing to prevent it within a month from the date of our letter: But we have received no anſwer from him.*

This is a ſummary account of our paſt proceedings, and of the preſent unhappy ſtate of things in the firſt church of Salem : *Religion is ſtill in bleeding, dying circumſtances, by reaſon of their diviſions ; the church neglects to uſe proper means for the healing of them, and the paſtor, abetted by a conſiderable number of the brethren, refuſes to let us have communion with the church, either by letters or by conference, and will not receive our admonition. We have therefore met together again to conſider our duty, and have determined as the reaſon of the thing, and our eccleſiaſtical conſtitution direct us to call in other churches to join in ſeconding our charitable admonition.*

Reverend,

Reverend, honoured, and beloved, *As we think the honour of Chriſt, the communion of our churches, and the welfare of ſouls are very nearly concern'd; we deſire the council and aſſiſtance of other churches in the management of this important affair. And by theſe preſents we intreat you to join with us, and aſſiſt us in the management of it; by ſending your elders and other delegates to meet our delegates, and the delegates of ſome other churches, at* Salem, *upon* Tueſday *the twenty third day of this month, at ten o'clock in the forenoon: where they may have the caſe more particularly laid before them, and will (we doubt not) be convinc'd of their duty to join with us in ſeconding our charitable admonition; which we hope, by the bleſſing of God, may ſerve the cauſe of Chriſt in the firſt church in* Salem, *and among all our churches.*

Wiſhing that grace, mercy and peace may be multiplied unto you from God the Father and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. We remain

Reverend, honoured and beloved,

yours in the faith and fellowſhip of the goſpel,

Joſhua Gee, Samuel Mather, } Paſtors, in the name, &c.

April 9. 1734. This letter was read at a meeting of the brethren of the ſecond church of Chriſt in *Boſton*, and voted to be ſent to the churches under the paſtoral care of the rev. Dr. *Sewall* and Mr. *Prince* in *Boſton*, the rev. Mr. *Cheever* at *Rumny-marſh*, the rev. Mr. *White* at *Gloceſter*, and the rev. Mr. *Wiggleſworth* in *Ipſwich*.

P. S. *It was tho't the charge of providing for delegates who are ſent in the third way of communion could not reaſonably be expected from any but the churches that ſend them: Our brethren therefore voted that the neceſſary charges of our delegates, ſhould be defray'd out of the churches ſtock.*

The

The Letter, to Mr. *Fiske*, is as follows,

Reverend Sir,

OUR *church, at a meeting laſt tueſday, with a brotherly affection, renewed their ſupplications to the God of peace for you, and for the firſt church in* Salem : *and having received nothing from you in anſwer to their letter of* March 5th. *nor heard that the church are uſing any means to heal your woful diviſions, they thought it their duty to call in ſome other churches, to join in ſeconding their charitable admonition, which they ſent to you laſt* February. *Accordingly they have written letters to ſeveral churches, that their delegates may meet our delegates at* Salem *on* Tueſday *the twenty third of this month ; hoping that, by the bleſſing of God on the united endeavours of his ſervants, brotherly love may again flouriſh among you in the fruits of righteouſneſs and of peace : And they beſeech you to communicate to the church an account of their proceedings, with their requeſt that the delegates may have opportunity to confer with them at the time before mentioned.*

Reverend ſir, This we write in their name, and at their deſire: and we ask your prayers, that God our Saviour would ever grant us all the gracious direction and conduct, needful for ſuch an improvement of our talents, as may prepare us to give up an account of our miniſtry with joy and not with grief. We are,

Reverend ſir,

your reſpectful and affectionate

Brethren and ſervants,

Joſhua Gee,
Samuel Mather.

Boſton, *Apr.* 11. 1734.

To the rev. Mr *Samuel Fiske*,
miniſter of the goſpel at *Salem*.

" The delegates of the third church in *Boſton*,
" the church in *Rumny-marſh*, and the firſt church in
" *Glouceſter* meeting at *Salem April* 23d. 1734, the
" delegates of the ſecond church in *Boſton* laid the
" ſtate of the caſe with their proceedings in giving
" an admonition to the firſt church in *Salem* before
" them, aſked their aſſiſtance in ſeconding ſaid ad-
" monition,

" monition, and then withdrew to wait for their de-
" termination. And the delegates of the other three
" churches proceeded to conſider the matter and
" voted as follows.

It appears to us, that there has been a ſcandalous diviſion and contention for a long time in the firſt church of *Salem*; that the ſaid firſt church in *Salem* have neglected to uſe the proper means for healing their ſaid diviſions: that the ſecond church in *Boſton* had juſt reaſon to give an admonition to the firſt church in *Salem* for the ſaid neglect; that the ſaid ſecond church in *Boſton* have given their ſaid admonition with regularity, prudence and tenderneſs: and we are ready to join them in ſeconding the ſame, if we ſhall find occaſion for it.

" Whether the delegates of the churches thus uni-
" ted found occaſion for this, will appear by their
" admonition dated *April* 25. and by the *report* which
" they made to their reſpective churches, *May* 30,
" and which is contained in our letters that called
" this council.

The ſecond admonition to the firſt church in *Salem* is as follows.

To the firſt church of Chriſt in *Salem.*

Reverend, honoured and beloved,

WE, the elders and meſſengers of the third church in Boſton, *the church in* Rumny marſh, *and the firſt church in* Gloceſter, *being called together at the invitation of the ſecond church in* Boſton; *and having heard an account of the ſtate of the firſt church in* Salem, *as it appears from a conſiderable number of letters and other papers laid before us by the delegates of the ſecond church in* Boſton, *together with the charitable admonition of the ſaid church to the firſt church in* Salem *for their neglect of the means of peace under their ſcandalous con-*

tentions ; and having used our best endeavours to inquire into the state of the first church in Salem *that so we might know our further duty towards said church and discharge it ; We the elders and messengers aforesaid, being convinced that there has been a scandalous contention for a long time in the first church in* Salem, *and that the said church has neglected to use the proper means for healing their divisions, as also that the second church in* Boston, *had just reason to give an admonition to the first church in* Salem *for that their neglect, & that the said second church in* Boston, *has given their said admonition with regularity, prudence and tenderness ; and we the elders and messengers of the churches before mention'd, having used repeated but unsuccessful applications to the reverend Mr.* Fiske *for a conference with him and his church, as well as proper endeavours to obtain a conference with a considerable number of the brethren of the church, and being now fully sensible of the just occasion of uniting with the second church in* Boston, *in seconding their charitable admonition, because the first church in* Salem *still continues in contention, refuses to hearken to the admonition given them, and still neglects to use the means of peace ; We therefore, together with the delegates of the second church in* Boston, *now declare unto you,* reverend, honoured and beloved, *that your conduct is in our judgment very scandalous, unbecoming your holy profession, and just matter of offence to all the churches of our Lord Jesus Christ through the land ; and that we think ourselves called, in obedience to Him and charity to our souls, to bear a testimony against it, according to the order and discipline professed in our churches.*

Dear brethren, we appeal to you, whether the churches of our Lord Jesus Christ, are not required to be at peace among themselves —— to warn them that are unruly —— to withdraw themselves from every brother that walketh disorderly —— to mark them which cause divisions and offences and avoid them —— to maintain brotherly love, —— and to follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

And

And for a church of Christ in your circumstances to behave themselves as you have done, that is, not so much as once to meet together to humble your selves before God under his awful frowns upon you, and to seek his direction, and consult about your own duty; when broken to pieces by contentions, which for years together have dishonoured Christ, obstructed the good effects of the word preached, weakened the interest of our holy religion in your church and town, and been a grievous hindrance to the spiritual comfort and edification of many of your brethren under the ordinances of the gospel:—Dear brethren, let your own consciences judge and declare whether this be to adorn the doctrine of God our saviour; whether this be not to give satan the great adversary of Christ and our souls opportunity and advantage to undermine and weaken the interest of pure and undefiled religion among us; and whether this be not just matter of offence to neighbour christians, who have any hearty concern for your spiritual welfare and the flourishing of Christ's kingdom by the power of godliness among you? Unless the holy spirit of God hath in a very awful manner withdrawn from you, we are confident that upon serious consideration and self-reflection you will judge and humble yourselves before the Lord.

We, the delegates of the churches abovementioned, do therefore, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, solemnly admonish and exhort you, our dear brethren, to repent of that sinful neglect of the means of peace, which argues the want of a becoming concern and zeal for the honour of Christ and the welfare of your own and others souls. We exhort you to set apart a day to humble yourselves with fasting before the Lord, to implore his pardoning mercy thro' the blood of the everlasting covenant, and to seek his grace that may enable you for the future to adorn your holy profession. And we advise and beseech you to meet together as a church of Christ, and, guarding against every evil disposition towards one another, prayerfully to consult about your duty, and to call in the help of other churches as it may be needful in order to promote peace with truth and holiness among you.

Whenever you ſhall in theſe methods return to your duty, and ſet yourſelves in an exemplary manner to make uſe of the proper means for healing your ſcandalous diviſions, and for removing and preventing the woful effects and conſequences of them; we the delegates of the churches before mentioned, in the name of the churches whoſe delegates we are, do aſſure you, brethren, that they will ſtand ready with joyful hearts to teſtifie before all the churches their having received ſatisfaction for the offence you have given, and their readineſs to exerciſe towards you all thoſe acts of communion which are due to a church walking in the faith and order of the goſpel, and adorning the profeſſion of chriſtianity.

But in their name we are likewiſe to aſſure you, brethren, that if you ſhall obſtinately and impenitently perſiſt in ſuch a neglect of the means of peace, which is juſt matter of offence to all the churches of Chriſt, they will, in obedience to him, and in love and faithfulneſs to you, think themſelves bound to forbear communion with you, and to proceed to make uſe of the help of a ſynod or council of neighbour churches walking orderly (if a greater cannot conveniently be had) for your conviction; hoping it will pleaſe the glorious head of the church to ſucceed the endeavours of his faithful ſervants for healing your diviſions, removing the ſcandal that has been occaſioned by them, and preventing their woful conſequences which we have reaſon to apprehend.

And now, dear brethren, ſuffer us to apply ourſelves to you, as the apoſtle to the church of Corinth, we beſeech you, by the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that you all ſpeak the ſame thing,
1 Cor. 1. 10. and that there be no diviſions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the ſame mind, and in the ſame judgment.
2 Cor. 13. 11. ——Finally, brethren, farewel, be perfect, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace ſhall be with you. *Amen.*

Signed *Salem*
April 25th. 1734.

Thomas

Edward Procter	Thomas Cheever, *Mod.*
Daniel Henchman	John White
William Hasey	Joseph Sewall
Thomas Cushing, jun.	Thomas Prince
Samuel Watts	Joshua Gee
James Peirpoint	Samuel Mather
Joseph Allen	Edward Hutchinson
Grafton Feveryeare	Josiah Willard
William Larrabee	Nathanael Saltonstall
Jacob Hasey.	James Saywood
	Nathanael Coit

The letters that called this council were in the form following.

To the church of Christ in the second and third churches in *Boston*, the church in *Rumny-marsh*, & the first church in *Glocester* send greeting.

Reverend, honoured and beloved,

THe melancholy occasion of thus applying ourselves to you, will appear from a report *we lately received from the delegates who in our name have given a second admonition to the first church of Christ in* Salem: *It runs in the following words.*

'Boston, *May* 30. 1734.

'THe elders and messengers of the churches, who 'have been giving the second admonition to 'the first church of Christ in *Salem*, for their neglect-'ing the means of peace under scandalous divisi-'ons, make the following report to our respective 'churches.

'The delegates of the third church in *Boston*, the 'church in *Rumny-marsh*, and the first church in *Glo-'cester*, being met at *Salem*, Apr. 23. 1734, took into 'their consideration the letter of admonition which 'had been sent by the second church of *Boston* to the 'reverend Mr. *Fiske*, to be communicated to the first

'church

'church in *Salem*; and were grieved to find, that he 'had refuſed to let the ſecond church of *Boſton* have 'communion with the firſt church in *Salem*, either by 'letters or by conference, when it had been deſired 'and claimed in repeated applications to him; and 'that the firſt church in *Salem* continued ſtill in the 'ſinful neglect of the means to heal their ſcandalous 'diviſions.

'Thoſe delegates therefore united with the dele-'gates of the ſecond church of *Boſton* in renewing 'their applications to the reverend Mr. *Fiske*, that he 'would allow them a conference with him and his 'church upon this melancholly occaſion; and, when 'this was abſolutely refuſed, they joined in ſeconding 'the admonition of the ſecond church in *Boſton*, as 'both the reaſon of the thing and the Platform of our 'church diſcipline, agreeably to the rules of God's 'word, directed.

'And though the committee, who were ſent to the 'reverend paſtor, could not have opportunity to de-'liver him this ſecond letter of admonition, yet we 'had opportunity to deliver ſeveral copies of it to a 'number of aggrieved brethren, who were willing to 'hearken to it, and deſirous to have it communicated. 'And having adjourned till *May* twenty eighth, that 'we might know whether our admonition had the de-'ſired good effect on the firſt church of *Salem*, it 'then appeared to us by letters and teſtimonies re-'ceived from one and twenty aggrieved brethren at 'Salem, that the ſaid letter of admonition has once 'and again been refuſed by the paſtor with repeated 'declarations, that he would neither hear nor receive 'it: That but four of the brethren who abett him in 'his unreaſonable and unchriſtian conduct could be 'perſuaded ſo much as to ſee the ſaid letter of admo-'nition or hear it read: And that a majority of the 'church refuſe to join in ſeeking a church-meeting, in 'order to conſult about their duty, and the means to 'remove the ſcandal they have given by their un-'chriſtian diviſions.

'So

' So that things remain in the ſame deplorable condition ; the firſt church in *Salem* refuſes to hearken to our charitable admonition, and appears to continue obſtinate and impenitent under ſcandalous diviſions. And it is with very ſorrowful hearts that we now think ourſelves obliged to declare our unanimous opinion, that our churches ought to proceed and make uſe of the help of a ſynod or council of neighbour churches walking orderly (if a greater cannot conveniently be had) for their conviction ; as we are directed by the reaſon of the thing, and the rules and directions of the holy word, as well as by our platform of church diſcipline.

' *Thomas Cheever*, Moderator.

Reverend, honoured and beloved,

Upon this melancholy occaſion we think it our duty to make uſe of the help of a council of neighbour churches walking orderly, for the conviction of our brethren the firſt church in Salem, *who appear to us obſtinately and impenitently perſiſting in ſuch unchriſtian diviſions as not only tend to the utter ruin of pure and undefiled religion among themſelves, but alſo give juſt matter of ſcandal to all the churches of Chriſt among us walking in the faith and order of the goſpel.*

When we conſider the relation our churches ſtand in to one another, the acts of communion wherewith we are obliged to acknowlege this relation, and the right hand of fellowſhip mutually given among us ; we cannot but expect, the faithful churches of Chriſt in the land will be ready to join with us and ſtrengthen us, in our charitable endeavours to convince the firſt church of Chriſt in Salem *of their ſinful neglect of the means of peace under their ſcandalous diviſions, and bring them to adorn their holy profeſſion by uſing thoſe means and by maintaining their communion with other churches.*

Theſe are therefore to deſire you our reverend, honoured and beloved brethren, by your elders and other delegates to meet the delegates of ſundry other churches at Salem

on

on the sixteenth day of July *at ten o'clock A. M. That we by our delegates may more particularly lay before you the state of the unhappy case, the steps we have taken in our charitable pursuit of communion with the first church in* Salem, *and what we may offer to justify our apprehensions that that church is obstinate and impenitent in scandalous divisions among themselves, and in refusing communion with their brethren of neighbour churches.*

If our conduct shall appear to you unjustifiable, we trust we are willing and ready to receive light and conviction, and to act as becomes our holy profession. But if our conduct shall appear agreeable to the word of God, and the acknowleged principles of congregational churches, we depend upon your united endeavours, by the blessing of God, to give light and conviction to that unhappy church: which may the prince of peace, and the great shepherd and bishop of souls, dispose and enable them to receive! And if the first church in Salem *notwithstanding your united endeavours shall persist in neglecting the means of peace under their scandalous divisions, and in refusing communion to neighbour churches (which we beseech our Lord Jesus Christ to prevent) then we must expect your declared judgment, that the said first church in* Salem *appears obstinate in scandal: Upon which particular churches thro' the land, according to their light, after due means with patience used may bear a testimony against that scandalous church, and give relief to such aggrieved members of it who will join in bearing testimony against them; as is directed in our platform of church discipline.*

We are yours in the faith and fellowship
of the gospel,

Thomas Cheever
John White
Joseph Sewall
Thomas Prince
Joshua Gee
Samuel Mather,

} In the name and at the desire of our churches.

P. S.

P. S. *We have made this application to the churches under the paſtoral care of the reverend,*
Meſſieurs Barnard *and* Holyoke *at* Marblehead,
Mr. Preſcot *at* Salem-precinct,
Mr. Wiggleſworth *at* Ipſwich-hamlet,
Meſſieurs Rogers *and* his Son *at* Ipſwich,
Mr. Chipman *at* Beverly,
Mr. Jaques *at* Gloceſter,
Mr. Emerſon *at* Malden,
Mr. Appleton *at* Cambridge,
Meſſieurs Bradſtreet *and* Abbot *at* Charleſtown,
Mr. Hancock *and* his Son *at* Lexington,
Mr. Walter *at* Roxbury,
Mr. Cotton *at* Newton,
Mr. Storer *at* Watertown,
Mr. Allin *at* Brookline,
Mr. Moody *at* York,
Mr. Wiſe *at* Berwick,
Mr. Phillips at Andover,
Meſſieurs Hale *and* Tuſts *at* Newbury,
Mr. Bowman *at* Dorcheſter,
Mr. Dunbar *at* Stoughton,
Mr. Barret *at* Hopkinton,
Meſſieurs Loring *and* Cook *at* Sudbury,
Meſſieurs Welſteed *and* Byles *at* Boſton.
And we are perſuaded, thoſe churches will think with us, that the charge of providing for delegates who are ſent on ſuch an occaſion, cannot reaſonably be expected from any but the churches who ſend them.

" The letters and teſtimonies mentioned in the ſaid report, were ſent in a letter to the rev. Mr. *Thomas Cheever*, moderator, dated *May* 27. 1734.

The letter ſent to the rev Mr. *Thomas Cheever*, Moderator, &c. from twenty one members of the church in *Salem*, is as follows.

Reverend ſir,

AGreeable to what was mentioned to us by the delegates of the churches of Chriſt met at Salem *23d of* Apr.

1734, *these will acquaint you of the several steps that have been taken in conformity to the advice then given us*

The next evening, the aggrieved brethren (to the number of above twenty, being all that were then in town,) met together. Those brethren who side with Mr. Fiske *being notified and desired to meet, but only two of them were there —. After spending some considerable time in discoursing of the unhappy state and condition of this church, a serious and deliberate consideration of the advice and admonition left by you (which was once and again read over---) and the nice crisis to which things were now come, we all who then met, (except Mr.* Estis) *agreed to send some of our number to Mr.* Fiske *with a desire from the brethren, that he would receive the admonition of your churches, and call his church together as a mean for peace. At the same time our brethren, Col.* Barton, *Capt.* Hathorne, *and Mr.* Nutting *were desired to go to those brethren who remained with Mr.* Fiske *and communicate to them the admonition of the churches, and desire them to join with us in asking a church meeting, and particularly to meet with us to consider about our duty on* Wednesday *the first of* May.

A summary account of what those committees did, you'l find in what they have given in. On the said Wednesday *evening the brethren received from their committees an account of their proceedings, with the little success they met : at which being much concern'd, and some almost discouraged from attempting any thing further, the greatest part of the time was spent in conferences ; 'till at last, resolving that nothing should be wanting on their part, in the exercise of all christian patience and charity, they resolved to draw up another message in writing to Mr* Fiske (*a copy of which is inclosed*) *and a number of the brethren were appointed to wait on him with that message, and the admonition of the churches — . Accordingly on* May 11*th* 1734, *the said committee waited on Mr.* Fiske, *and received in answer to their message what they have given in on the same.*

Thus

Thus, reverend ſir, you and the other reverend elders and meſſengers ſee in what a lamentable, deplorable ſtate and condition things remain with us: not one ſtep taken by Mr Fiske *and his party to make up and heal our long and open diviſions, nor any propoſals for an accommodation. Were it not that God is pleaſed graciouſly to incline the hearts of you his ſervants to compaſſionate our caſe and move for our relief, how unhappy and diſtreſſed muſt our ſtate be? And ſince the matter now ſeems to be of common concern to all the churches of Chriſt in this Land, we hope and truſt in God, that he will enable his faithful ones in the churches, to ſtand faſt in the liberties wherewith Chriſt their head has made them free, and render you the happy inſtruments of re-inſtating us in thoſe ways and means of holy diſcipline, agreeable to the platform of the churches, which we were in the uſe of, and of which our reverend paſtor, the venerable Mr.* John Higginſon, *is pleaſed to ſay, in his* teſtimony to the order of the goſpel. "*Theſe are the precious legacies* "*which our fathers, now beholding the face of the Lord* "*Jeſus Chriſt in glory, have left unto us*——" *In the mean time we earneſtly beg your and your churches prayers to the great head of the church, that we may be furniſhed with thoſe ſupplies of grace that may be needful for us in ſuch a day and hour as this is; and that the churches thro' this land may be preſerved in the purity, peace and order of the goſpel, on the foundations they were happily eſtabliſhed and for a courſe of years bleſſed and proſpered in.*

We are reverend ſir,

your brethren in the faith and order of the goſpel,

Salem, May 27. 1734.

Benjamin Lynde
James Lindall
Thomas Barton
John Nutting
Henry Weſt
Benjamin Lynde, jun.
Samuel

To the reverend Mr. *Thomas Cheever*, moderator of a council, who met at *Salem* April 23. 1734.

To be communicated to ſaid council.

Samuel Oſgood	Samuel Ropes
John Archer	John Bickford
Miles Ward, junr.	Nathanael Phippen
John Bickford, junr.	Joſeph Hathorne
Benjamin Lambert	James Grant
Benjamin Marſton	Nathanael Ropes
Samuel Weſt.	Samuel Giles
	George Daland

Here follow the letters & teſtimonies that were incloſed in the foregoing letter to the rev. Mr. *Cheever*.

The Teſtimony of Mr. *Benjamin Lynde*, junr. & others,

WE the ſubſcribers, being deſired by a number of the brethren of the firſt church of Chriſt in Salem, *to wait on Mr.* Fiske *with a meſſage from them, on the* 28 *of* April 1734. *went to deliver our meſſage at his houſe; but were told Mr.* Fiske *was not at home; we then told the young woman, that we had a meſſage to deliver Mr.* Fiske, *and would come again at two o'clock in the afternoon; and deſired her to tell him, that we had been there, and pray him to be at home at the appointed time. About two in the afternoon we again met, and minuted down our meſſage in the following words,*

"Sir, a number of the brethren of this firſt church "who met together laſt night, having received from "the delegates of four churches of Chriſt in this land "a letter of advice and admonition to this church, "have deſired us to wait on you with the ſame, and "pray you would communicate it; and we are in "their names to deſire you to take the advice therein "and call our church together as a means for peace, "amidſt our unhappy diviſions which ſo greatly diſ-"honour religion, and give ſcandal and offence to the "churches of Chriſt.

Going with this meſſage to Mr. Fiske's *houſe, we inquired for him, and were told, he was not at home; and inquiring of the young woman, with whom we left our deſire of Mr.* Fiske's *being at home, whether ſhe had told*

told Mr. Fiske *of it; she answered, she had, but he said nothing to it, and further that they could not tell where he was. From his house we went to Dr.* Gathman's *and ask'd for Mr* Fiske, *who came to the door to us: we told him, we had been at his house to wait on him, but he was not at home: he immediately replied, he had seen Mr.* Phippen *and had inquired what the business was, but he did not tell him; and that he had said to Mr.* Phippen, *if it was any thing from the ministers, &c. who had been here, he should not receive it. We told him, we had a message to him, if he pleased to hear it; but were not sent by those ministers, but from the members of his own church. Mr.* Fiske *replied, if it was about the ministers, he had told them, when here at his own house, that he should not have to do with them. We told him, we desired to deliver him our message; and said*

'sir, a number of the brethren of this first church, who 'met together last night, having received from the 'delegates of four churches of Christ a letter of ad-'vice and admonition—— *Before we could say one word more, Mr.* Fiske *interrupted, and said, I can't hear you; and drew back from the door. We said, pray hear us, sir. He replied, I can't hear you, and went from us into the next room, where was Dr.* Gathman *and others. We followed him taking out the admonition, and desired him to receive the message from the brethren of the church. On which he hastned to the back door, and says, I can't or I shan't hear you, and so opened the door. We replied, pray sir, treat us as christians, and answer as you think best; but, being out of the door, he only said, I shan't hear you, and shut the door upon us, and did not return. So that we were forced to return without delivering the message we were sent about.*

Benjamin Lynde, junr.
Nathanael Phippen
Samuel Giles
Miles Ward, junr.

To the reverend Mr. *Thomas Cheever*, moderator of a council who met at *Salem April* 23. 1734.
To be communicated.

The teſtimony of Col. *Barton* and others.

WE the ſubſcribers, being deſired by the brethren of the firſt church of Chriſt in Salem *who are diſſatisfied with the conduct of the reverend Mr.* Fiske *the paſtor of ſaid church, to go to the brethren of ſaid church who continue with Mr.* Fiske, *to deliver or read to them the admonition of four churches of Chriſt (conven'd at* Salem *the twenty third of* April 1734) *to the firſt church in* Salem ; *and alſo to deſire them to meet with the ſaid diſſatisfied brethren on wedneſday the firſt day of* May *following, to join with us in intreating the reverend Mr.* Fiske *to call a meeting of the church for the healing our unhappy diviſions ; We accordingly went to them, and could prevail with but four of the brethren to ſee, or hear the ſaid admonition read : but moſt of them ſaid, they would conſider of meeting with the brethren ; yet none of them met with us, except our brother* Samuel Ruck, *who refuſed to join with us in applying to Mr.* Fiske *for a church meeting.*

Thomas Barton
Joſeph Hathorne
John Nutting.

Salem, May 27. 1734.

To the reverend Mr. *Thomas Cheever*, moderator of a council who met at *Salem*, April 23. 1734.

To be communicated.

A letter ſent to the reverend Mr. *Fiske* from twenty one aggrieved brethren of his church.

Reverend ſir,

WE the brethren of the firſt church of Chriſt in Salem *being deeply affected with the ſad and diſtreſſed ſtate of this church yet remaining in an unhappy diviſion, and ſenſible, as well of the great ſin and guilt that lies on us, while we remain ſo, as of our indiſpenſible duty to be in the uſe of all proper means for the healing our diviſions*

ſions, ... on the ſerious conſideration of the advice and admonition of the delegates of four churches of Chriſt to this church, reſolved to apply again to you the paſtor of the church, and by you to the brethren; that agreeable to our duty and in conformity to the ſaid admonition which is herewith preſented, we as a church of Chriſt may forthwith meet together; and that humbling our ſelves before the Lord for the tokens of his anger, we may earneſtly implore the return of his gracious ſpirit to lead and direct the paſtor and the church in the paths of peace; that we may conſult about our duty, conſider the unhappy cauſes of our diviſions, and examine into the matters of charge exhibited by ſome of the brethren againſt the paſtor, as in their paper of the 16 *of* March 1731; *and uſe all poſſible endeavours for removing our difficulties, and procuring us that peace and unity which is the happy fruit of the Holy Spirit.*

Sir, tho' you were pleaſed in an unkind manner to refuſe our meſſage ſent by our brethren to this end, yet (as we are ſtedfaſtly reſolved, that nothing ſhall be wanting on our part) we again ask a church-meeting; and we hope that God will graciouſly incline your heart to come into what we can't but think abſolutely neceſſary under our preſent circumſtances; eſpecially at a time when there is ſo much reaſon to fear, that the faithful churches of Chriſt are near to withdrawing their communion from us; a motive of it ſelf ſufficient to deter us from any longer (againſt the admonition of the churches) obſtinately perſiſting in the ſinful neglect of the means of peace, to the great diſhonour of the holy religion of the bleſſed Jeſus, and the ſcandal and offence of the churches of Chriſt in this land.

We are

reverend ſir,

your aggrieved brethren,

Salem, May 6th. 1734.

Benjamin

Samuel Oſgood
Samuel Giles
James Grant
Miles Ward, junr.
John Bickford, junr.
Benjamin Lambert
Joſeph Hathorne
Samuel Weſt
John Archer
James Odell.
Benjamin Lynde
Thomas Barton
Benjamin Lynde, junr.
Benjamin Marſton
James Lindall
John Nutting
Henry Weſt
Samuel Ropes
Nathanael Phippen
Nathanael Ropes
George Daland

To the reverend Mr. *Samuel Fiske*, paſtor of the firſt church of Chriſt in *Salem*.

To be communicated.

The teſtimony of the Honourable Judge *Lynde* and others.

WE the ſubſcribers, being deſired by a number of the aggrieved brethren of the firſt church of Chriſt in Salem, *to wait on the reverend Mr.* Fiske *with a written meſſage from them, on the eleventh of* May 1734. *went to Mr.* Fiske's *houſe; where happily meeting with him, we acquainted him, that we were come to deliver him a meſſage from a number of the brethren of this church. But theſe words were ſcarce delivered to him, when he ſaid, ſtop—— brethren; if your meſſage, or what you have to ſay, is any thing from the churches (that have been lately at* Salem *) or in the leaſt concerning any matter of that affair, I will neither hear nor receive it. We told him, it was from a number of the church whereof he was Paſtor; He ſtill replied in the ſame words as before, That he would neither hear nor receive any thing, that had the leaſt tendency or relation to the affairs or buſineſs of the ſaid churches —— So (after declaring our admiration at his obſtinacy) we deſired Mr.* Nutting, *(to whom the ſeveral churches advice or admonition, with our meſſage in writing were committed) to deliver them to Mr.* Fiske; *which accordingly he offered to him.*

But

But Mr. Fiske *(as at other times) ſtarted back, and declared, he would receive nothing of that nature from us. Upon which we bid Mr.* Nutting *leave the ſaid papers with him; which he did on the table before him: and at the ſame time, we intreated Mr.* Fiske *to read and ſeriouſly conſider of the matter. He in a fret ſaid, it was an impoſition on him and an inſult; we anſwered him, our deſign was good in offering, and leaving with him that our meſſage, which (after all) he might take notice of, as he pleaſed.*

Benjamin Lynde
Thomas Barton
Benjamin Marſton
John Nutting.

To the reverend Mr. *Thomas Cheever*, moderator of a council who met at *Salem*, April 23. 1734.

To be communicated.

" The reverend Mr. *Fiske* was notified of the cal-
" ling this council by a letter dated *June* 19. 1734:
" which is as follows.

Reverend ſir,

WE incloſe you the copy of a report *which the churches under our paſtoral care have received from their delegates; and theſe are to inform you, and pray you to communicate to your church, what has been done upon it. Our reſpective churches apprehend, that the firſt church in* Salem *give juſt matter of ſcandal to all the churches of Chriſt among us walking in the faith and order of the goſpel, by perſiſting obſtinately and impenitently in ſuch unchriſtian diviſions as tend to the utter ruin of pure and undefiled religion, and by refuſing communion with neighbour churches. They have therefore tho't it their duty, to ſeek the help of a council of neighbour churches walking orderly, for the conviction of that offending church. And we have, in their name and at*

their desire, signed and sent forth letters to twenty seven churches mentioned in the inclosed list, requesting them to meet, by their delegates in council at Salem *on the* 16th *day of* July *next: at which time we expect our churches will have an opportunity by their delegates to lay before a large council a more particular account of the melancholly case, the steps they have taken in a charitable pursuit of communion with the first church in* Salem, *and what they have to justify their apprehensions that that church is obstinate and impenitent in scandalous divisions, and in refusing communion with neighbour churches.*

Reverend sir, pray let a number of pastors, your respectful brethren, intreat you to approve your self an affectionate and faithful pastor, by seriously considering the deplorable state of religion, in that unhappy divided flock committed to your charge; by putting on self-denial, humility, meekness and charity; and by leading that flock into the use of those means of peace which may remove the scandal that has been given, and prevent a more public and awful testimony against it: or if you think, the first church in Salem *has not been scandalously negligent of the means of peace under their long contentions, or that they have not been treated according to the gospel rules of justice and charity, in the repeated admonitions that have been given by neighbour churches; then we beseech you to join with them in answering what our churches will lay before the council, called as above, to judge of their conduct*

We trust our churches, if their conduct shall appear to the council unjustifiable, will be open to light and conviction; and that, were they made sensible of having treated the pastor or any brethren of the first church in Salem *unjustly or uncharitably, they would, as becomes the disciples of Christ, make it publickly known, that they repent of their misguided zeal: and if their conduct shall be tho't agreeable to the rules of God's word, and the acknowleged principles of congregational churches, (as we trust it will) we pray the God of all grace, by blessing the endeavours of other churches, to incline your heart and the hearts of all your brethren, so to unite in the means of healing your scandalous*

ſcandalous diviſions, as may adorn your holy profeſſion, and reſtore the firſt church in Salem *to the charity of their offended neighbours.*

Reverend ſir, it ſeems ſtrange to us, if there be need of apoligizing for the conduct of our churches, even to you. As we can for our ſelves declare, that in the part we have acted, we have not been govern'd by ſelfiſh views, or by any perſonal diſaffection to you, (whoſe miniſterial abilities we have ever been ready to acknowlege, and whom we deſire to ſee continued in your paſtoral office, while it may conſiſt with the duties and privileges of particular churches) ſo we think our reſpective churches may appeal to the world, whether any thing but a conſciencious concern to do their duty in promoting the common intereſt of Chriſt's kingdom among us, can reaſonably be tho't to engage them in a proceſs of diſcipline, void of any worldly motives to compenſate for the trouble and charge it unavoidably brings upon them.

Reverend ſir, tho' you cannot have the ſame ſentiments with us, concerning what we take to be our duty, yet we hope you can heartily join with us in this prayer; may the God of love and peace make us all perfect in every good work to do his will, working in us that which is well pleaſing in his ſight through Jeſus Chriſt, and prepare us to give up a good account of our important ſtewardſhip to that glorious perſon who will be our judge, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

We are

reverend ſir,

your affectionate brethren,

Thomas Cheever
John White
Joſeph Sewall
Thomas Prince
Joſhua Gee
Samuel Mather.

June 19th. 1734.

To the reverend Mr. *Samuel Fiske,*

" Thus we have given a true and impartial repre-
" ſentation of the melancholly caſe which has occaſi-
" oned the preſent application to other churches.

And,

§ 3. " We now proceed in the laſt place to pro-
" poſe *what our churches deſire and expect of this vene-*
" *rable council* : And this may be very briefly repre-
" ſented in the following particulars.

" When you have taken this melancholly caſe into
" your deliberate and prayerful conſideration, they
" deſire and expect,

1. " That, if their conduct ſhall appear unjuſtifiable,
" you will endeavour to convince them of their fault;
" that they may publickly declare their repentance,
" and repair any injury done to the *paſtor* or any of
" the *brethren* of the firſt church in *Salem*.

But,

2. " That, if in your judgment the *firſt church in*
" *Salem* hath deſerved the admonitions which have
" been given, you will endeavour their conviction;
" that they may no longer neglect proper means for
" healing their ſcandalous diviſions.

And

3. " That, if the conduct of the reverend Mr. *Fiske*
" in refuſing to let neighbour churches have commu-
" nion with the firſt church in *Salem* by letters and
" conference, ſhall appear unreaſonable and arbitrary,
" you will bear a faithful teſtimony againſt his male-
" adminiſtration.

And

4. " That if after due means with patience uſed the
" *firſt church in Salem* will not be perſuaded to ſeek
" peace and purſue it, as becomes the diſciples of the
" Prince of peace, you will declare them obſtinate in
" ſcandal : That ſo particular churches through the
" land

" and according to their light, may bear a teſtimony
" againſt that church, and give relief to ſuch members
" of it, who will join in bearing teſtimony againſt
" them, as is directed in our platform of church-diſ-
" cipline.

" And thus having in the name of our churches de-
" clared the grounds upon which they have proceed-
" ed, given a faithful narrative of the melancholly
" caſe which has occaſioned their calling you to-
" gether, and propoſed what they deſire and expect
" from this venerable counſel, we now leave the
" caſe with you; waiting your call to give any
" further light upon it, and to make anſwer to any
" objections as we ſhall be able; and praying that
" the God of all grace may lead you into the beſt
" determinations upon it, and make you inſtrumen-
" tal to heal the diviſions of the firſt church in
" *Salem*, and to quicken the churches of *New Eng-*
" *land* in diſcharging their duties and maintaining
" their priveleges, to the glory of his name thro'
" our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: to whom be glory for
" ever. Amen.

" *Salem, July* 16 1734. The delegates of the ſe-
" cond and third churches in *Boſton*, the church
" in *Rumney-marſh*, and the firſt church in *Glo-*
" *ceſter*, agree that this report be laid before the
" eccleſiaſtical council here convened.

" Sign'd in the name and by the direction of the
" delegates of the churches before mention'd,

Thomas Cheever, Mod.

When matters had been thus laid before the coun-
cil in public, they adjourned to the town-houſe, that
they might conſider and debate upon them in private.
And ſome of the members, obſerving that certain *pro-*
poſals mention'd in the letters from the reverend Mr.
Fiske

Fiske and his brethren to the ſecond church in *Boſton* which began this proceſs, were not among the papers, made a motion that they might be ſent for: ſome alſo thought it proper, that they ſhould have a copy of the *reſult* of a council of ten churches which met at *Salem* laſt ſummer. Whereupon the reverend Mr. *Gee*, one of the paſtors of the ſecond church in *Boſton*, was called in, and asked the reaſon why the ſaid *propoſals* were not given in among the papers: to which he made anſwer, that a copy of them had never been ſent to the ſecond church in *Boſton* by Mr. *Fiske* or his brethren, and that all the letters and papers which had been ſent from or to the ſaid church were laid before the council: And, being asked why the ſecond church in *Boſton*, when they were informed of certain *propoſals* made by the reverend Mr. *Fiske* to his aggrieved brethren in order to heal their diviſions, yet engaged in this proceſs without taking them under their conſideration? He replied, that, as he was ſent to act in conjunction with the other delegates, who were expecting to be called in to anſwer any objections that might be offered againſt the proceſs, he prayed to be excuſed from anſwering objections when they were not preſent. Whereupon the council went into a debate for ſome time, *Whether it would be proper for them to ſend for the ſaid propoſals and reſult*, and adjourned to the next morning.

The council met according to adjournment; And, the delegates of the four churches being called in, they aſſigned *reaſons*, why they thought it not fitting in ſuch a proceſs of diſcipline with the firſt church in *Salem*, that the ſecond church in *Boſton*, ſhould conſider and act upon the *propoſals* which Mr. *Fiske* had made to a number of his aggrieved brethren: they gave *anſwers* alſo to the ſeveral objections which had been made againſt their proceedings in admoniſhing the firſt church in *Salem*, and calling this council: And, upon the withdraw of the ſaid delegates, the council conſidering that thoſe papers did not contain any

tranſactions

tranſactions of the firſt church in *Salem*, but related only to the merits of a cauſe in controverſy between the reverend Mr. *Fiske* and ſome of the brethren, and were never laid before the four churches or this council by either of the parties to ſaid controverſy, therefore voted, *That they would not ſend either for the propoſals, or for the reſult*; and then they adjourned to three o'clock in the afternoon.

But, before we proceed to the tranſactions of the afternoon, we think proper to take notice, that, by reaſon of the votes laſt mentioned, the reverend Meſſieurs *Barnard*, *Holyoke*, *Wiggleſworth*, *Chipman*, and *Tufts*, withdrew from the council leaving a paper which runs in the following words, " Foraſmuch as we apprehend the light we might reaſonably expect is ſhut from us, we cannot think ourſelves obliged to act in the dark, nor ſhall we: and therefore we leave this as our teſtimony againſt ſuch proceedings, and withdraw from the council." The next day, in compliance with a vote of the council, *not to put this paper on their files before it was ſigned*, it was endorſed as follows, " We ſubſcribe to the within written, the reverend Mr. *Chipman* & Mr. *Tufts*, who acted with us, being gone home. *John Barnard*, *Edward Holyoke*, *Samuel Wiggleſworth*."

The council, being met according to their adjournment, declared their judgment upon the caſe which had been laid before them, by paſſing the following votes, viz.

That the ſecond church in *Boſton* was a competent church to begin this proceſs——That the conduct of the ſecond church in *Boſton* with reſpect to the firſt church in *Salem* appears agreeable to the word of God and the acknowleged principles of congregational churches--That the ſecond church in *Boſton* proceeded regularly in calling in help to ſecond their admonition to the firſt church in *Salem*--That the ſecond

church

church in *Boſton* called in proper churches for this purpoſe---That the four churches proceeded regularly in ſeconding the admonition of the ſecond church in *Boſton*---That the four churches proceeded regularly in calling this council---That the four churches which called this council ſhould be deſired to join with this council in their future proceedings.——

The delegates of the four churches were then called in; & theſe votes being read to them, they were deſired to join with the council in their future proceedings, which they did accordingly, when they had entred their diſſent againſt the method of voting by churches; and the council adjourn'd to the next morning.

The next morning a committee was ſent to acquaint the reverend Mr. *Fiske* with theſe proceedings, and to deſire him to call his church together, and let the council have a conference with him and them at the town-houſe, at three o'clock P. M. And in the caſe of the reverend Mr. *Fiske*'s refuſal, the committee were to notify the brethren of the firſt church in *Salem*, that the council deſired to meet them at the ſame time and place. This committee returned and made report, that the reverend Mr. *Fiske* refuſed to hear what they had to ſay from the council; that the aggrieved brethren ſaid, that they would attend the council at the time and place; that but one or two of the other brethren gave any encouragement to hope for their coming to the council: and upon this refuſal of the paſtor and the majority of the brethren to confer with the council, a committee was choſen to prepare *proper matter of conviction* to be laid before the firſt church in *Salem*.

In the afternoon the *aggrieved brethren* came to the council and manifeſted their earneſt deſire of the churches meeting to uſe means for healing their unhappy diviſions, in compliance with the repeated admonitions which had been given them.

But

But of the other brethren of the first church in *Salem*, one only (Mr. *Samuel Ruck*) came to the council, who laid before them the letter of *proposals* before mentioned; which he pray'd might be considered as containing the reasons of his conduct in the affairs of the first church in *Salem*. And though the council had before refused to send for those proposals, for the reasons that have been given; yet now when they were thus brought in by a member of the church, the council thought themselves obliged to read and consider them: because it had been publickly declared that the council was ready to consider whatever any of the church had to lay before them. Accordingly this paper was read, and considered; and the question being put, *Whether the council would have any further consideration of it*? It pass'd in the negative.

The committee, chosen to prepare *proper matter of conviction* to be laid before the first church in *Salem*, brought in their draught in a letter of solemn advice from the council, which was read a first, second and third time, and then voted unanimously by the delegates of *fifteen* churches present, besides the delegates of the four churches who called the council.

Whereupon the council voted, that *several copies of this letter should be prepared against the morning*, and chose a committee to deliver them to the first church in *Salem*. And the next morning, when they had voted, that *the moderator should sign the letters of advice in the name of the churches belonging to this council* and that *the scribes should notify all the churches of this council a fortnight before the time of adjournment*; they adjourned to the fifteenth day of *October* 1734 at ten o'clock in the forenoon, at the town house in *Salem*.

The aforesaid *letter of solemn advice*, as it was signed by the moderator, and sent to the first church in *Salem*, runs in the following words.

To the first church of Christ in *Salem*.

Reverend, honoured and beloved,

WE the elders and other messengers of the several churches hereafter mentioned, in council convened at the request and desire of the second and third churches in Boston, *the church in* Rumny-marsh, *and the first church in* Gloceſter, *agreeable to our platform of church discipline, that they might lay before us the state of your unhappy case, with the steps they have taken in their charitable pursuit of communion with you; accordingly those churches laid before us an admonition of the second church of* Boston *duly sent you, which was seconded by the three other churches aforementioned in conjunction with the second in* Boston: *The conduct of which churches we have upon mature consideration approved and justified as apprehending their proceedings agreeable to the word of God and the constitution of these churches. We are sorry that you should deny coming to us when you were once and again desired so to do: this we cannot but look upon as a further instance of your refusing to hold communion with these churches. And the whole of your conduct in this affair appears to us to be very offensive, and which, if persisted in, will expose you to such a censure as we hope and earnestly desire you will use your utmost endeavours to prevent; it being no less then a deprivation of the privilege of communion with these churches.*

Dear brethren, we are deeply concerned at the deplorable and hazardous circumstances you are in at this day: which yet in our apprehension might be retrieved, could you be persuaded to hearken to the affectionate advice and solemn admonitions which have been given to you, from so many of the faithful churches of this land; who, we believe, had nothing else in view but the honour

nour of Christ, and the promoting the interest of religion in these churches and more especially among yourselves.

And we can't but expostulate in particular with you, reverend sir, and say, That a great part of the offence already given to our churches, and the unhappy consequences of refusing to hearken to such advice as you have had, will lie at your door. And therefore we earnestly beseech you to consider, how much it is incumbent upon you to lead the church under your pastoral care into some healing method, by calling them together to consult the means of peace. And it is very surprising to us, that a minister of the Gospel of peace, and the pastor of a congregational church, should for so long a time refuse a method so easy and natural in it self, and so agreeable to the word of God, and the practice of the churches in New-England.

We would also exhort you, dear brethren, to consider whether it be not your duty in particular to desire and insist upon it, that there may be a meeting of the church in order to the healing the sore breaches and the revival of religion among you.

For the obtaining these great ends the council have agreed to give time; and it would be matter of great joy to all the churches throughout this land, to understand that, by the help of the Spirit of Grace, you have employed this space, so as to bring your long and grievous contentions to an happy conclusion: that this ancient and long flourishing church in Salem *may be once again in peace, and the great trouble of our returning hither upon this sorrowful occasion be thereby prevented.*

And now, brethren, we commend you to God and to the word of his Grace which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

Nehemiah Walter. *Mod.*

Signed in the name and by the direction of the churches convened in council as follow,

The first church in Roxbury,
The first church in York,
The church in Byfield,
The church in Berwick,
The second church in Marblehead,
The third church in Ipswich,
The church in Cambrige,
The church in Malden,
The first church in Watertown,
The second church in Glocester,
The church in Hopkinton,
The church in Stoughton,
The church in Dorchester,
The first church in Ipswich,
The north brick church in Boston.

P. S. *It was voted unanimously that this letter of advice should be accepted, and that copies of it should be sent to the first church in* Salem. *And then the council adjourned to* tuesday *the fifteenth day of next* October, *at the town house in* Salem, *at ten o'clock in the forenoon.*

Salem, *July* 20. 1734.

Nehemiah Walter, *Mod.*

At the second session of the council.

Salem, Oct. 15. 1734. The committee, appointed to prepare a narrative and representation to lay before the council, agree, that this narrative and representation be laid before the council.

Joseph Sewall, Chairman of the committee.

Salem, Oct, 15. This narrative was read a first time; and on *October* 16, in the afternoon, it was read again and compar'd with the minutes of the council; whereupon the council voted, that this narrative be accepted, and that the committee be thank'd for their care and trouble in preparing it.

Jeremiah Wise, Mod.

The narrative continued ; giving an account of the proceedings of the council in their ſecond ſeſſion.

THE council met at the time and place of adjournment, the elders, and other delegates of ſeventeen churches being preſent ; and having choſen the reverend Mr. *Jeremiah Wiſe* of *Berwick*, to be their moderator in the abſence of the reverend Mr. *Nehemiah Walter*, who was detained through bodily indiſpoſition, they thought it requiſite to enquire, Whether their committee had diſpoſed of *the letters of advice* to the firſt church in *Salem* according to their direction : which committee reported as follows, " That the reverend Mr. *Fiske* " would not receive the letter directed to the church, " but ſpake as if he eſteemed it a nuſance ; that deacon *Oſgood* alſo refuſed to receive it ; but that the " *aggrieved* received it.

Hereupon the council appointed a committee to make inquiry, what ſteps had been taken by the firſt church in *Salem* with regard to *the letters of advice*, which had been duly left with them ; and whether as yet they had uſed any means of peace and healing. And the return which this committee brought to the council was this, " That Mr. *Fiske* ſaid that he had " not ſeen the contents of *the letter of advice*, nor had " taken any ſteps about it ; that deacon *Oſgood* declared concerning the brethren adhering to Mr. *Fiske* " that they would not read nor take any notice of it ; " and that the brethren who are *aggrieved* had read it " and were diſpoſed to conform unto it.

Though

Though the council met not with the desired success in their messages to the reverend Mr. *Fiske* and the church, yet they were not discouraged, but appointed another committee to wait on him, and desire him to call his church together; that so the council might have a conference with him and them at the town house on the next day at eleven o'clock in the forenoon: and they directed this committee, that, in case Mr. *Fiske* should refuse this their reasonable request, then they should go to all the brethren of the church, and entreat a conference with them at the time and place aforesaid. And so the council adjourn'd to the next morning.

The council, being met according to adjournment, receiv'd the report of their committee appointed the evening before, which was, "That the reverend "Mr. *Fiske* utterly refused to comply with the desire "of the council, and thought himself imposed on "by any messages from them; that the brethren who "are *aggrieved*, accepted the invitation, and would "attend the council at the time and place before-men-"tioned; and that, of the other brethren, *some* won-"dred that the council would trouble them, and *others* "said they would not come to the council, unless "Mr. *Fiske* would come with them.

The brethren of the church that are *aggrieved* attended the council at the time prefixed, and openly delared, that they had not consented to the offence of the first church in *Salem*, but *bore their testimony against it*: And, in order to prove that they were desirous of a meeting of the church, that so the means of peace might be used, they referr'd the council to some letters which had passed since the last sessions of the council: which letters are as follow.

To

To thoſe brethren of the firſt church of Chriſt in *Salem*, who call themſelves aggrieved.

Dear brethren,

WE would with your leave put into your hands, the following written method, which we ſincerely think will (in the ſight of God) be for the honour of this church, the which we are ready to purſue, and would gladly joyn with you in purſuing and perfecting it. Wherefore we pray you will ſubſcribe your names to this paper, as we have done, and ſend it to us within a week, that we may carry it in your name and ours, to our reverend paſtor in order to his calling a church meeting to perfect the ſame. If we have not your concurrence in the time as above prefixt, we think it our duty to proceed therein in our own name.

Who are

your brethren in the faith and fellowſhip of the goſpel.

'WHereas there hath been for many years formerly a lecture upheld in the town of *Salem*, in the firſt church there, which diſcontinued upon the demiſe of our former paſtors; And whereas we find upon the church records, the expreſt deſire of the church to have a lecture, and we are ſtill earneſtly deſirous of the ſame: We do therefore (laying aſide all regards to any unhappy indecency of expreſſion or carriage that any among us may have been apprehenſive off, with reſpect to a lecture) heartily deſire the reverend Mr. *Samuel Fiske* our paſtor to join with us in requeſting the reverend Meſſieurs *John Barnard*, *Edward Holyoke*, *Ames Cheever*, *Benjamin Preſcot*, *John Chipman*, *Peter Clerk*, *Nathanael Henchman*, *Joſeph Champney*, *William Jeniſon*, *John Warren*, and *Stephen Chaſe* (or as many of them as ſhall pleaſe) to ſet up a lecture once a fortnight

in

' in ſaid church. In the courſe whereof we cannot ' but hope, our reverend paſtor will ſometimes ſee ' cauſe to entertain us. And further we deſire the ' reverend Mr. *Samuel Fiske*, to call a church meeting ' in order thereto.

Peter Oſgood,
Samuel Ruck,
James Ruck,
Samuel King,
John Holliman,
Ephraim Skerry,
Benjamin Gerriſh,
Edward Norice,
Samuel Symonds,
Timothy Pickering,
Charles King,
Ahijah Eſtes,
John Mackmallin,
Ebenezer Felton,
Benjamin Young,
Jonathan Woodwell,
Edmund Batter,
John Coles,
Thomas Willis,
John Giles,
John Gavet,
Joſeph Orne,
John Maſcall,
Nathanael Oſgood.

Salem, Aug. 12. 1734.

To be left with brother *James Lindall*, *Nathanael Phippen*, and *Samuel Giles*, or either of them.

To be communicated

Delivered *Auguſt* 16. 1724.

[The anſwer.]

To the brethren of the firſt church of Chriſt in *Salem*, who declare themſelves to be eaſy under Mr. *Fiske*'s adminiſtration.

Dear brethren,

'A *Paper dated the twelfth of* Auguſt *current, we received on the ſixteenth following, wherein is contained what appears to us under the preſent ſituation of*

of our affairs, to be a very odd proposal; nevertheless lest we should be mistaken in our apprehensions of it, we cannot but think it would be both safe and honourable for us to meet together to confer; thereby we may be let into the reasons which have induced you to conclude the method you have proposed, to be honourable for us; and if they appear to us to be reasonable, we shall readily and gladly joyn with you in prosecuting and perfecting the same: for as we always have been, so we are still very desirous to joyn in any proposal that can be judged safe and honourable for this church; and as we have oftentimes desired a conference with you relating to our unhappy difference in a sentiment, so we do now again earnestly desire a meeting with you forthwith, and before you proceed to present your propopal to the pastor, that if possible, we may concur in such methods of peace, as may (by the will of God) procure it for us.

But if you shall altogether refuse us such a meeting and conference, then for answer to your paper we beg leave to say, that you are not insensible that we (the most of us who subscribe hereto) have charged our reverend pastor with interpolating in the church records a vote relating to the lecture (which perhaps may be the record you refer to in your letter) and with charging sacriledge and perjury on the church for nonconpliance with that interpolation, which he calls a vote, and equal to a vow to God. This is a crime in its nature so heinous, that without suitable satisfaction we cannot set under our reverend pastor's administration: so that it is our pastor's immorality and ill conduct which has removed us, and still keeps us from joyning with you in publick worship from time to time, and not the want of a public lecture. Altho' the discontinuance of the said lecture by our reverend pastor was a great grievance, yet it would never have produced a separation: and so of consequence our re-union depends not upon the preaching of a lecture, either by Mr Fiske or others, in the house which most of us have forsaken, or in any other; but upon a christian satisfaction from Mr. Fiske, as to the articles of charge, for which he has often been requested.

Brethren, how can you ſincerely think it will be for the honour of this church (in the ſight of God) for us to joyn with you, in complying in any wiſe with a vote which we think in our conſciences is a wicked interpolation, and which has cauſed ſo much ſin and diviſion among us? No, brethren, let the cauſe of our grievance be firſt removed, and there is no doubt but we ſhall gladly joyn with you in reviving the lecture, or doing any thing elſe that may be for our mutual peace, love, edification, the honour of this church, and for the glory of our Saviour the head of it.

We hope your proceeding in your method, will at leaſt produce a meeting of this church, which we have long ſought for; at which we hope to be preſent, and then to have the matters of charge againſt the paſtor laid before the church, ſince ſatisfaction could never be obtained from him in a private way. And as ſuch of us as have exhibited a charge againſt the paſtor, have long ſince deſired and declared; ſo we ſtill expect and deſire to be cenſured if we have without cauſe, and wrongfully charged our reverend paſtor: but if we ſupport our charges, we expect the ſatisfaction we are juſtly intituled to; which will procure for us that peace we have earneſtly ſought for.

Salem, *Auguſt* 20th. 1734.

We are
your brethren in the faith and fellowſhip of the goſpel.

	James Lindall
Samuel Giles	Thomas Barton
James Grant	Benjamin Marſton
Miles Ward, jun.	John Nutting
John Archer	Samuel Ropes
Benjamin Lambert	Nathanael Phippen
John Bickford, jun.	Benjamin Lynde, jun.
Henry Weſt	Samuel Weſt
George Daland.	Nathanael Ropes

To deacon *Peter Oſgood*, and
Mr. *Nathanael Oſgood.*
To be communicated.
Delivered *Aug.* 22. 1734.
by *James Lindall, Nathanael Phippen, Samuel Gyles.*

Another

[Another letter to the aggrieved brethren.]

To the brethren of the firſt church of Chriſt in *Salem*, who call themſelves aggrieved.

Dear brethren,

YOurs of the 20th inſtant, we received: in anſwer whereto we ſay, that from the firſt time we ever ſaw the papers of your controverſy with the reverend Mr. Samuel Fiske *our paſtor, (which papers you referred to in your letter to us dated* Aug. 14*th* 1732*) until this day, we were and ſtill are of opinion, that it was, and ſtill is, your unqueſtionable duty, (in the proceſs you make againſt him) that you bring no ſurmiſe, ſuppoſition, or apprehenſion, but a plain accuſation, and lay it before him in writing, making mention of all and every thing at which you are offended; and that you alſo, in the next place, lay before him in writing the proof thereof for his conviction; and when you find that you and he cannot agree about the ſufficiency of the proof, then, and not ſooner, will it be time to ask the opinion of others about it, and a very few wiſe men may be ſufficient to decide that. And till you have done this, we cannot ſee how it is poſſible truly to ſay, you have uſed all ſuitable and ſcriptural methods to heal the breach among our ſelves: wherefore we think it lies at your own door, that this matter is not brought to a criſis & concluſion; which opinion we ſincerely believe is juſtly founded on* Mat. 18. 15, 16, 17. *and on* Mat. 7. 12. *Alſo on a ſpecial law for this purpoſe in* 1 Tim. 5. 19.

And whereas you did again write a paper to us, dated Octob. 13. 1732. *and ſince telling us you have laid a voluntary ſuſpenſion on your ſelves, and that you could not with good conſciences, and to your ſpiritual edification, receive the ſacrament in that church where Mr* Fiske *is the adminiſtrator, ſo long as you entertain'd ſuch an opinion of his conduct as you then did.——— Brethren, we ſeriouſly declare, we were (from the firſt time we ſaw this your ſecond letter) and to this day are of*

opinion, that the grounds and reaſons upon which you have withdrawn from the holy communion in the ſame place with us, were, and yet are, unwarrantable and inſufficient; wherefore we deſire and intreat you now (as ſome of us have ſome time paſt) to return to us, and worſhip God in the ſame houſe, and commune at the ſame holy table with us again: and this our opinion, we think, is juſtly & properly founded on our Lords precept and example; on his precept in Mat. 23. 1, 2, 3; *on his example; whoſe cuſtom was to worſhip God and commune in ſpecial ordinances in the jewiſh church with thoſe that ſat in* Moſes's *ſeat, and never put them from their ſeats, while the jewiſh oeconomy continued; notwithſtanding his ill opinion, and certain knowlege of their evil hearts, conduct and converſation.*

Wherefore we cannot by any means adviſe or countenance the calling a church meeting, for the buſineſs you propoſe; inaſmuch as it is plain to us, you have not taken the ſteps neceſſarily preparatory thereto; beſides which you ſee we have already, at your motion, given our opinion upon it. Nor can we think it other than moſt fit firſt to reunite in ſetting up a lecture; ſince it is plain, and known to us all, that about that firſt of all did the diviſion in the church ariſe. And what wiſe ſurgeon would not begin his cure at the bottom of the wound? Beſides, you know this is the firſt thing you pitch upon in your ſurmiſes againſt our reverend paſtor. And the ſetting up a lecture would highly gratify a great number of this church and pariſh; which we thought by your diſcourſe, in times paſt, lay very near you, and are now ſorry to ſee you backward to joyn with us in obliging them.

Thus we have let you into the reaſons which have induced us ſincerely to believe it will (in the ſight of God) be for the honour of this church to proſecute and perfect the method we have put into your hands,

Who are your brethen in the faith
and fellowſhip of the goſpel,

Salem, *Aug* 29. 1734.

Peter

Peter Oſgood,
Edmund Batter,
James Ruck,
Nathanael Oſgood,
Ephraim Skerry,
Samuel King,
Benjamin Gerriſh,
Ahijah Eſtes,
John Holliman,
John Coles,
Edward Norice,
Timothy Pickering,
John Gavet,
Ebenezer Felton,
John Mackmallin,
Samuel Symonds,
Charles King,
Benjamin Young,
John Giles,
John Maſcall.

To brother *James Lindall*, *Nathanael Phippen*, and *Samuel Giles*, or either of them.

To be communicated

N. B. Receiv'd Septemb. 9th. after 9 o' clock at night per *Nathanael Phippen.*

P. S. *We expect brethren you will not again write to us in this affair, until ſuch time as you have complied with our reverend paſtor's propoſals, which we think are reaſonable and ſcriptural.*

[The anſwer.]

To the brethren of the firſt church of Chriſt in *Salem*, who declare themſelves ſatisfied with Mr. *Fiske*'s adminiſtration.

Dear brethren,

WE received your letter of the 29th of Auguſt, *as an anſwer to ours of the 20th of the ſame month, and obſerve that you have omitted anſwering the material part of our letter, which was, our deſires of a free conference with you. We have earneſtly ſought for ſuch a conference from the very beginning of our controverſie, and have*

have repeated it time after time to this day, but cannot once as yet obtain from you ſuch a reaſonable requeſt. It is very ſtrange and ſurprizing, that chriſtians of the ſame ſociety cannot be brought together, to confer like brethren on matters of difference, eſpecially when that difference is of opinion only, and relating to a third perſon. We make no queſtion, that, had you been willing to confer with us, we ſhould have offered you ſuch reaſons as might eaſily have ſatisfied you, that the articles mentioned in that paper of the 16th of March 1731, *were proper charges, and not only ſurmiſes and ſuſpicions, and that we have always looked upon them as charges: and thoſe of us that ſubſcribed that paper do now declare them to be plain charges (and expect to ſupport them as ſuch) and that till of late they have been looked upon as charges by our reverend paſtor himſelf. Alſo we make no queſtion, but in a conference we could offer reaſon ſufficient to convince you of the unreaſonableneſs of Mr.* Fiske's *propoſals, which you at preſent eſteem to be ſo reaſonable and ſcriptural. We once more deſire this conference of you, not knowing but even at this time it may be (by the divine bleſſing) a means of extricating us out of our ſorrowful circumſtances.*

You indeed tell us in your laſt letter, that from the firſt
'*time you ever ſaw the papers of our controverſy with the*
'*reverend Mr.* Samuel Fiske *our paſtor (which paper we*
'*referred to in our letter to you of the 14th of* Auguſt
'1732) *until this day, you were and ſtill are of opinion,*
'*that it was and ſtill is our unqueſtionable duty (in the*
'*proceſs we make againſt him) that we bring no ſurmiſe*
'*ſuppoſition or apprehenſion, but a plain accuſation, and*
'*lay it before him in writing, making mention of all and*
'*every thing at which we are offended; and that we alſo*
'*in the next place lay before him in writing the proof thereof*
'*for his conviction, and when we find that we and he can-*
'*not agree about the ſufficiency of the proof, then and*
'*not ſooner will it be time to ask the opinion of others*
'*about it.*

Brethren, it is uncertain to us, whether you have, at leaſt all of you, ever ſeen thoſe papers that we referred

you

you to, in that letter of the 14th of Auguſt before mentioned. We rather incline to think you have not ſeen them; for had you ſeen them and impartially conſidered them, it ſeems to us next to an impoſſibility that you ſhould conclude with ſuch abſurdity upon them. We very much fear, and that not without reaſon, that our difference in ſentiment ariſes from the want of a conference, your unacquaintedneſs with thoſe papers you mention, and your eaſineſs to ſubſcribe any thing that is propoſed to you. We pray you would examine your ſelves and conſider, whether by theſe means you have not been inſtrumental in lengthning out and continuing our unhappy diviſion. And if upon examination you find you are not fully acquainted with the true ſtate of the controverſie, but have been too eaſily and with too little conſideration, led into the ſubſcription of papers relating to it; we hope you will not eſteem it a diſhonour to recede from your preſent opinion, which you have imbib'd, from a want of knowlege of the true ſtate of the caſe, but on the contrary look upon it to be the greateſt honour you can do your ſelves and this church, to uſe your utmoſt endeavours to obtain a meeting of the church, in which the whole affair may be opened and fairly debated before you: and then judge ye upon it with the impartiality and integrity of true chriſtians.

But brethren, if thoſe papers were laid before you and duly conſidered by you when you received our letter of the 14th of Auguſt 1732, or about that time, (as your letter would ſeem to intimate) then we muſt confeſs that they had an extraordinary operation indeed; that ſo many of you ſhould, at the firſt ſight of them, be led into ſuch a nice and exact method of iſſuing our controverſie, as Mr. Fiske himſelf did not conceive of till ſix or eight months after; for at this time he was very full in a very different method, which he declared to us ſhould be his only method: but theſe circumſtances ſeem to us to carry with them too great an air of incredibility.

But be it ſo, brethren, that our papers had ſuch an extraordinary effect; where then was your faithfulneſs either to our reverend paſtor, or to us the aggrieved? why did you not acquaint him with this excellent and

ſcriptural

ſcriptural method, and propoſe it to us as our indiſpenſible duty immediately to comply with it, and thereby have prevented two years grievous contention among us? Certainly the mutual obligations we are under to watch over one another for our edification, loudly called for this chriſtian adviſe and aſſiſtance from you.

If your letter intimates that you have ſeen and conſidered of our papers, when you received that letter of the 14*th of* Auguſt *before mention'd (and it muſt mean ſo, if it means any thing) you have brought your ſelves into this dilemna; either that you have been guilty of a great unfaithfulneſs, or of ſomething we are loth to name: but we would rather charitably cover this appearance with a ſuppoſition, that you have at this time (as well as at other times) been too eaſily led into the ſubſcription of what you have not fully underſtood.*

Brethren, your opinion of the unwarrantableneſs and inſufficiency of the ground and reaſons of our withdrawing from the holy communion in the ſame place with you, and our deafneſs to all your intreaties to return to you again, and our unreaſonableneſs in not complying with Mr. Fiske's *propoſal, are ſo far from making it unadviſeable to have a church meeting, that they are ſufficient reaſons and ſtrong obligations to you, earneſtly to endeavour the calling of one as ſoon as poſſible; to admoniſh us for thoſe our enormities, and to cenſure us for the ſame, unleſs we profeſs repentance, and return to you again, or can give you a ſatisfactory reaſon for our conduct.*

Brethren, in anſwer to the latter part of your letter referring to the lecture, we muſt aſſure you that you are intirely miſtaken, if you imagine that the diſcontinuance of the lecture by Mr. Fiske *is our firſt charge (or as you call it ſurmiſe) againſt him; we only pray you to read carefully the paper of charges, and you may plainly ſee your miſtake. We intirely agree with you, that it is the wiſdom of a ſurgeon to ſearch into and begin his cure at the bottom of the wound: At this we have wholly aimed in the proceſs of our controverſie; and that which is contained in that paper of the* 16*th of* March 173[illegible], *we declare*

declare to be the bottom of this grievous wound, and till that be fully ſearcht into, we cannot depend on a thorough cure.

We are your brethren in the goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt,

Salem Sept. 19. 2734.

Miles Ward, jun.	James Lindall
George Daland	Thomas Barton
John Archer	Benjamin Marſton
John Bickford, jun.	Benjamin Lynde, jun.
Benjamin Lambert	John Nutting
Samuel Giles	Samuel Ropes
James Grant	Nathanael Phippen
Samuel Weſt	Joſeph Hathorne
Henry Weſt.	Nathanael Ropes

To deacon *Peter Oſgood*, or Mr. *Nathanael Oſgood*, or either of them.

To be communicated:

A letter from ſeveral of the aggrieved brethren to the rev. Mr. *Fiske.*

Rev. Sir,

WE have received a paper from ſome of our brethren, asking our concurrence with them in ſubſcribing a paper, in which you are to be deſired to joyn with the ſubſcribers, in requeſting ſeveral neighbouring miniſters to ſet up a lecture once a fortnight in this church, as alſo to call a church meeting in order thereto.

Sir, Though we have not concurred in the ſubſcription, nor do fully underſtand, how a church meeting is to perfect the ſame; yet we heartily concur with our brethren, in praying that there may be a church meeting as ſoon as poſſible; where we deſire to be preſent, and of which we

desire to be timely notified: and we intreat, yea we insist upon it as our right and privilege, that the charges exhibited against you in that paper of the 16th of March 1731, *may then be heard and considered; and that it be a part of the business of the said meeting, to hear and consider the same: and we would hope that at last this may be a means, by the divine blessing, of putting an end to our sinful and scandalous divisions.*

We are your aggrieved brethren,

Salem, August 20th. 1734.

James Lindall
Thomas Barton
Benjamin Marston
John Nutting
Samuel Ropes
Nathanael Phippen
Samuel West
Nathanael Ropes
Samuel Giles
James Grant
Benjamin Lynde, jun.
Miles Ward, jun.
John Archer
Benjamin Lambert
John Bickford, jun.
Henry West
George Daland.

To the rev. Mr. *Samuel Fiske*, pastor of the first church of Christ in *Salem*.

In the afternoon there was a motion made by several members, who were not present at the former session of the council, that the *letter of proposals*, which was then bro't in by Mr. *Samuel Ruck*, a member of the first church in *Salem*, for his own justification, might be read again and re-considered: And the said letter was read accordingly, and is as follows.

To

To Mr. *James Lindall* in *Salem.*

To be communicated.

Brethren,

YOur's, without date, I received on the first instant. In answer whereto, observe, that I have ever been ready, to joyn issue with you, on the following reasonable terms, viz.

That you commit to writing all that you have to lay to my charge at any time or place, or about any matter to this day: so as that you make it plainly an accusation, not a supposition or surmise: And that you also lay before me in writing, the proofs thereof for my conviction. Which accusation if you make good, I stand ready to give you satisfaction and compensation: But if you fail of making proof, I expect the same satisfaction and compensation from you. And if we cannot agree about the sufficiency of the proof, I stand ready to ask the opinion of others about it, as we shall agree to do.

This is the alone method of issue into which I shall go.

And am, brethren,
Your affectionate and faithful pastor.

Salem, May 3d. 1733.

A true copy per Samuel Fiske.

After the reading of which letter, the council appointed a committee to take it into their consideration, and make report thereon; and then they adjourned to the next day.

On the next day the report of the committee, chosen the evening before, was read a first, second and third time; and an acceptance of it was voted by the delegates of seventeen churches then present, *nemine contradicente*: It is as follows,

Salem, Octob. 17. 1734.

'The committee appointed last evening by the council now convened in this place, to take the *proposals*, brought by Mr. *Samuel Ruck* into this council at their former Session, into consideration, make report thereon as follows, *viz.*

'WE find upon examination, that Mr. *Samuel Ruck* 'offered this paper of proposals, as containing 'the grounds and reasons of his conduct in not joining 'with the aggrieved brethren in moving for a church 'meeting &c: We also find by several letters sub-'scribed by a number of the brethren of this church, 'who have adhered to the pastor, that these proposals 'have been pleaded for their justification, in their not 'pursuing any other measures for healing the divisions 'of this church: And we are humbly of opinion, 'that the said proposals are very insufficient for the 'justification of those who have relied upon them, (as 'a sufficient excuse for their not having pursued pro-'per measures for the removal of those grievous and 'long continued divisions, which have been and still 'are, found in the midst of them) they being liable to 'great exceptions in every article therein contained.

As for example,

1.] 'They begin, "*That you commit to writing all that you have to lay to my charge at any time or place, or about any matter to this day.* Upon which we would observe

1. 'That an offender is undoubtedly obliged to give 'christian satisfaction, to whom it is due, upon his being 'informed of the offence, and challenged to make sa-'tisfaction, be that information by *word* or *writing*; 'and therefore he has no right to refuse and disregard 'such information and challenge, till it be brought to 'him in *writing*.

2. 'When a person has given offence in a variety of 'instances, he is under obligation to make satisfaction 'for every particular offence he has committed; and 'has

' has no right to refuſe or delay giving ſatisfaction in ' one inſtance wherein it is required, becauſe ſatisfacti- ' on is not at preſent demanded in the other inſtances ' wherein he has offended: for the dueneſs of ſatis- ' faction in one inſtance, no way depends upon the be- ' ing or not being of other offences.

2.] 'Tis ſaid, " *So as that you make it plainly an accuſation, not a ſuppoſition or ſurmiſe.* Upon which we would ſay,

' That the Goſpel every where enjoins charity; in ' conſequence of which law, chriſtians ſhould be ex- ' ceeding cautious, how they take up ſuſpicions and ' ſurmiſes againſt their chriſtian brethren, eſpecially ' againſt an elder: yet a matter may be ſo circumſtan- ' ced, as that there may be juſt grounds of fear and ' jealouſy, that a perſon has acted ſinfully, and ſo as to ' give a public ſcandal; inſomuch that it may be ſo ' far from a breach of charity to lay before the ſuſpect- ' ed perſon thoſe grounds of fear and jealouſy, as that ' it may be a proper exerciſe of charity, and but a ' faithful diſcharge of our duty towards him.

3.] It goes on, " *And that you alſo lay before me in writing the proofs thereof for my conviction.* Unto which

1. ' The objection lies, which has been mentioned ' in the firſt particular above.

2. ' It doth not appear, that the aggrieved have not ' ſtood ready to lay before their paſtor all their proofs ' for his conviction: but on the contrary they have ' been ſeeking a fit opportunity therefor, by endea- ' vouring to obtain the preſence of the whole church ' to aſſiſt them, and judge between them.

3. ' If it be intended, they ſhould do this in a private ' way; we think it a very unuſual way of proceedure: ' The unreaſonableneſs thereof appears in this, that Mr. ' *Fiske* who is the accuſed party, would have this ad- ' vantage over thoſe that call themſelves the injured ' party, that he will know the whole of their ſtrength, ' before perſons be choſen to arbitrate in this diffe- ' rence

'rence; and if he finds the proof ſtrong and ſufficient 'for his conviction, he may then diſagree with the ag. 'grieved as to the arbiters, and ſo intirely fruſtrate the 'pretended means of accommodation; but if he finds 'the proofs weak and inſufficient (which by the ſaid 'propoſals they would be bound not to ſtrengthen 'with any further or new evidences) then Mr. *Fiske* 'may inſiſt upon ſatisfaction from the aggrieved, for 'ungrounded calumnies and aſperſions raiſed againſt 'him.

4.] --- "*Which accuſation if you make good, I ſtand ready to give you ſatisfaction and compenſation, but if you fail of making proof, I expect the ſame ſatisfaction and compenſation from you.* Upon which we would obſerve,

'That in caſe it is intended *the ſame in kind and de-* 'gree, it cannot by any means be made appear, that 'the crimes wherewith they will be chargeable, in 'caſe they fail of proof, will bear an exact proportion 'in point of guilt, with thoſe crimes he will be found 'guilty of, in caſe the charges be made good: and 'therefore it cannot be juſt to ſubmit to ſuch a rule.

5.] 'Tis ſaid, "*And if we cannot agree about the ſuffi-* *ciency of the proof, I ſtand ready to ask the opinion of others about it, as we ſhall agree.*

Upon which it may juſtly be asked; 'How and 'when ſhall it be known, whether the parties *can* a- 'gree? It may appear manifeſtly enough at one in- 'terview and another, that they *do not* at preſent agree: 'but that will not evidence, that they *cannot* agree: 'and ſo the matter may be unreaſonably delayed, and 'put off from time to time.

'Again, who are thoſe others whoſe opinion ſhall 'be asked? There is no intimation of laying the 'matter before the church, or an eccleſiaſtical council: 'but we find by a letter ſigned by ſome of the bre- 'thren dated *Auguſt* 29. 1734, (who being the paſtor's 'adherents are moſt likely to know his ſenſe therein)

'that

'that mention is made of a *very few wiſe men* as ſuffi-
'cient for this purpoſe.

'Further, in caſe they ſhall diſagree as to the ſuffi-
'ciency of the proof, what aſſurance is there, that
'they will any more agree about thoſe perſons whoſe
'opinion is to be asked? And if they diſagree here,
'what proviſion is there made, to accommodate this
'matter, and bring things to an iſſue?

'Yea, it may be asked; in caſe they ſhould agree
'upon the ſufficiency of the proof, and yet differ up-
'on the head of the ſatisfaction that is due; how can
'the matter be ſettled by any thing in theſe propoſals?

6.] In the cloſe 'tis ſaid, "*This is the alone method of iſſue into which I ſhall go.*

'We apprehend, that no accuſed perſon can be
'veſted with a right of preſcribing ſuch a method of
'accommodation, without an exact attendance upon
'which, his accuſers ſhall be denied all ſatisfaction.
'And for the reverend Mr. *Fiske* to be ſo peremptory
'in ſaying, this is the alone method of iſſue into which
'he will go, appears to us, as if he had ſaid, *Let the*
'*intereſt of Chriſt ſuffer as it will, let my church be un-*
'*der contentions till it is conſumed by them; I will not*
'*regard it, nor for the prevention of it, go one hair's*
'*breadth from my own preſcriptions and propoſals:* And
'we think this is not only extremely diſtant from the
'example of the great apoſtle, who *became all things*
'*to all men, that he might gain ſome*; but gives little
'evidence of his wearing that part of the character of
'a goſpel miniſter, *not ſelf-willed.* And in brief,
'when we conſider how deficient and unſcriptural
'theſe propoſals are, 'tis hard to determine, whether
'the weakneſs and folly, or ſin and wilfulneſs be the
'greater, which is diſcovered in ſo abſolutely aſſerting,
'that he will go into no other method of iſſue.

'Upon the whole, the committee are of opinion,
'that the propoſals are very unreaſonable and unſcrip-
'tural, contrary to the wiſdom and meekneſs becoming

'a

'a goſpel miniſter, and inconſiſtent with the conſtitu-
'tion of theſe churches, and can have no tendency to
'promote peace and charity in this divided church of
'*Salem*. And conſequently, theſe propoſals are no
'juſtification of Mr. *Ruck* and the reſt of the church
'that adhere to Mr. *Fiske*, in not endeavouring a
'meeting of the church for that end.

'But if for arguments ſake it ſhould be allowed,
'that theſe propoſals made all the conceſſions that can
'in reaſon be expected from him; then it is certain,
'that the aggrieved brethren are guilty of a great
'offence, in refuſing to comply with ſuch reaſonable
'terms of accommodation, and continuing in their ſepe-
'ration: which guilt the church bring upon them-
'ſelves, by neglecting thoſe brethren, and by not
'meeting together to take proper meaſures for their
'conviction and healing.

Salem October 17. 1734.

This report was read a firſt, ſecond and third time; and voted *nemine contradicente*.

Jeremiah Wiſe, Mod.

This report being accepted as has been related, the council thought it might be of advantage to have it communicated: And, inaſmuch as ſeveral in the firſt church of *Salem*, beſides the paſtor, have much inſiſted on this *letter of propoſals* from Mr. *Fiske* to his aggrieved brethren, as a ſufficient reaſon for their neglect of any other means of peace; the council therefore voted, that a committee be ſent to the reverend Mr. *Fiske*, deſiring him that he would call his church together, and be preſent with them at ten o' clock in the forenoon of the next day, at the town houſe; when and where he, and they, might hear ſuch *remarks upon his propoſals*, as the council judged would be *ſufficient for their*

their conviction: And this committee returned with the following account, "that Mr. *Fiske* utterly refuſed to have the meſſage read unto him, and ſaid, he tho't himſelf impoſed on by the council in the repetition of their meſſages unto him."

The council hereupon ſent a committee to deſire all the brethren of the firſt church in *Salem* to attend them at nine o'clock on the next morning in the town houſe, that they might hear the aforeſaid *remarks of the council* upon Mr. *Fiske's* propoſals: And that committee was alſo directed to inform them concerning the purpoſe of the council, to have a publick rehearſal of their remarks upon the ſaid propoſals at eleven o' clock in the forenoon of the next day in the meeting houſe of the firſt pariſh in *Salem*: And then the council adjourn'd to nine o' clock the next morning.

And, when the council was met according to adjournment, their committee diſpatched the evening before, informed them, "that of the brethren who "adhered to Mr. *Fiske*, two only ſpake of coming to "them, and they doubtfully, and that the reſt peremp-"torily refuſed." However, a conſiderable number of the aggrieved brethren only of the church attended, and had Mr. *Fiske's* propoſals, with the council's remarks upon the ſame, read unto them; and declared, that as they had not conſented to the offence of the firſt church in *Salem*, ſo they did not then conſent unto it, but bare witneſs againſt it. And it now appeared to the council, that *twenty three of the brethren* were aggrieved & *offended* at the conduct of the firſt church in *Salem*, and *in due ſort bore their teſtimony againſt it.*

Upon this the council adjourned to the meeting houſe; where the *propoſals* and the *remarks* upon them, were publickly rehearſed in a large aſſembly: and, after the reading of theſe papers, the Moderator publickly declared in the name of the council, that, if

there were any members of the first church in *Salem*, who consented not to the offence of the church, but would properly bear witness against it, they were desired to attend the council at the town house at three o 'clock in the afternoon when they should be heard: And then the council adjourned to that place.

When the council convened at the town house in the afternoon, it appeared to them, that the pastor and a majority of the brethren, continued to neglect the means of peace and unity; and that the first church in *Salem* was not only obstinate and impenitent in scandalous divisions and contentions among themselves; but had greatly added to that their scandal, by refusing to give any satisfaction to neighbouring churches, earnestly intreating the same; and even refusing all communion and conference with her sister churches, in order to remove the scandal continuing and growing in that christian community. And therefore the council were greatly grieved to find themselves obliged, from a concern for the honour of Christ, the order of the gospel, and the pure communion of these churches, to come to the following result.

THE council of churches here convened, having examined and maturely weighed the case of the first church in Salem, *and having reinforced the repeated admonitions to the first church in* Salem, *by leaving with them in* July *last, a letter of advice for the conviction of that offending church; and having offered other proper methods for that end, which have proved ineffectual; the council now declare their apprehension and judgment, that the first church in* Salem *has slighted all the means which have been used with them; nor has complied with their duty as a church in any one particular.*

As therefore the said church notwithstanding a long series of reproofs, admonitions, advice, and other means, upon the account of their open offences, still remains obsti-

nate,

nate, nor resolved or even disposed to reform the evil of their ways; we the council aforesaid think our selves call'd to bear witness against the male-administration of that offending church, according to the direction of our platform of church-discipline.

Accordingly in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, we protest, declare and publish, that this church is become obstinate and impenitent in scandal, and has justly expos'd it self to a sentence of non-communion from our several churches.

Having made which declaration, we further proceed to declare to all the churches of our Lord Jesus Christ thro' this province, that the first church in Salem *have justly forfeited the privilege of communion with these churches, and deserve to be deprived of that privilege.*

However, the council conformably to the pattern of our great Saviour, who has compassion on the ignorant, and on such as are out of the way, think and make known, that the churches to which we respectively belong, may out of tenderness and compassion, delay to pronounce the sentence of non communion, for the space of three months from the date of this our declaration.

And if after this patient and tender delay of this sentence, it shall not appear to our respective churches, that the first church in Salem *have repented, and betaken themselves to the use of proper means of peace and healing, we then advise, that our churches approving and accepting the judgment of this council, declare the sentence of non-communion respectively concerning them; and that they withdraw themselves from participation with them at the Lord's table, and from such other acts of holy communion, as the communion of churches doth otherwise allow and require. And we also advise all the churches of our Lord Jesus Christ thro' this province, out of a religious care to keep their own communion pure, to pro-*

nounce the same sentence of non-communion concerning that obstinate and impenitent church; and to withdraw in the same manner from them.

And in as much as there are several members of this offending church, [*viz.* Benjamin Lynde, James Lindal, Benmin Marston, Benjamin Lynde, *jun. Esqrs; Col.* Thomas Barton, *Messieurs* John Bickford, Henry West, Samuel Ropes, Nathanael Phippen, John Nutting, Samuel West, Nathanael Ropes, George Daland, Samuel Giles, James Grant, John Archer, Miles Ward, jun. Benjamin Lambert, John Bickford, *jun* James Odel, *Capt.* Joseph Hathorne, *Mr.* Samuel Osgood, and *Capt.* Jonathan Gardner.] *who do not consent to the offence of the church, but in due sort bear their testimony against it, we advise our respective churches, and all the churches of Christ thro' the province, to receive them to wonted communion; for we apprehend these to be innocent persons in that church, who therefore should not suffer with the offensive. And furthermore we advise, that if such innocent persons withdraw from the fellowship of their own church, and offer themselves to the fellowship of another, they may be received into it, as if they had been orderly dismissed from their own church.*

In the name and by the direction of the council

Salem, October 18th. 1734.

Jeremiah Wise, *Moderator.*

This result having been three times deliberately read and considered, was accepted and voted by the council, the delegates of fifteen churches being present, and every member manifesting his consent; except the rev. Mr. *Prescot*, and the other delegate of the church in *Salem-Precinct*, who entered their dissent.

Upon

Upon this the council desir'd the Moderator to sign the Result, & appointed a number of persons to complete and print the narrative of the council's proceedings, and communicate the printed narratives to all the congregational churches in the province.

The council then removing into the meeting house of the first parish in *Salem*, read the result to a numerous auditory. And prayer being made (as had been usual morning & evening) the council withdrew, and ordering a copy of the result to be delivered to the reverend Mr. *Fiske*, to be communicated to the said first church in *Salem*; another to be delivered to deacon *Osgood*, and a third to be delivered to the aggrieved; the moderator then, pursuant to a vote, declared the council to be dissolved.

ERRATA.

Page 7. line 3, read 1733. p. 21. l. 14 r. *divisions*. p. 22. l. *penult* dele *and are as follows*. p. 24. l. 23. for *think* r. *thing*. p. 32. l. 7. for *from* r. *Mr.* p. 61. l. 11. r. *council*. p. 63. l. 16. r. *shut out*. p. 64. l. 18. dele *the*. p. 68. l. 26. f. *lay*, r. *be laid*. p. 73. l. 13. dele *a*. l. 15. r. *proposal*. p. 78. l. 26. r. *papers*. p. 81. l. 6. r. 1734.

WE the ſubſcribers being appointed by the late council at Salem, *to prepare a narrative of their proceedings for the preſs, and when printed, to communicate the ſame to the ſeveral congregational churches in the province; have accordingly endeavoured to anſwer the deſire of the council; and atteſt the foregoing account to be a true narrative of their proceedings, according to their minutes, and the beſt of our knowlege.*

Witneſs our hands,

Joſeph Sewall
Thomas Prince
Joſhua Gee
Samuel Mather
Edward Hutchinſon
Joſiah Willard
Samuel Danforth
William Brattle
Thomas Cuſhing, jun.
James Pierpoint
Edward Proctor
Daniel Henchman
William Lee
William Larrabee
Grafton Feveryear
Jonathan Simpſon
James Halſy
Daniel Pecker
Moſes Peirſe.

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MUSEUM

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